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# *THEOCRITUS*

## *TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY*

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# THE IDYLLS OF THEOCRITUS

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*The version selected is a translation into a variety of metres by Charles Stuart Calverley. Though possibly best known as one of the most delightful parodists of the nineteenth century, Calverley was an admirable scholar in the ancient classics and perhaps the most richly endowed of all their English translators. Few have equaled his fidelity in the rendering of difficult texts, or have so readily taken fire from the original and glowed with a corresponding flame; and few have so successfully escaped the stiffness of form which mars the majority of metrical translations. His rendering of Theocritus shows Calverley at his best. Originally published in* 1869, *and twice reprinted in small editions, it has been the cherished possession of many booklovers, but never until now has it been given an outward form of fitting distinction.*

*The Riverside Press Edition will be, in a measure, a companion volume to the "Georgics of Virgil," published in* 1904, *although slightly different in size and in minor details of typography. The same Italic type is set in an open page with generous margins. The title, the three*

*main divisions of the volume, and the numerous short pages are ornamented with appropriate subjects from antique gems, engraved on wood by M. Lamont Brown.*

*The book is printed on a fine English hand-made paper, and is bound in decorative boards. Three hundred and thirty copies will be printed, of which three hundred are now offered for sale. The price is* $10.00 *net, postpaid.*

*This announcement represents the size, paper, and general style of typography.*

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*October*, 1906

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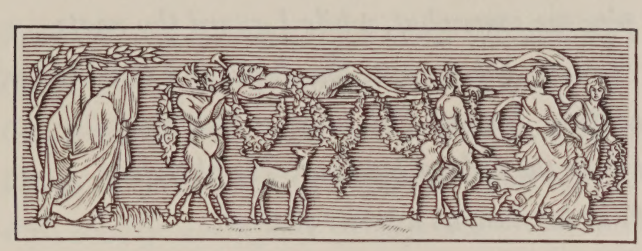
# *IDYLLS*



# *IDYLL I*

## THE DEATH OF DAPHNIS

THYRSIS  A GOATHERD

THYRSIS. *Sweet are the whispers of yon pine that makes*
*Low music o'er the spring, and, Goatherd, sweet*
*Thy piping; second thou to Pan alone.*
*Is his the hornèd ram? then thine the goat.*
*Is his the goat? to thee shall fall the kid;*
*And toothsome is the flesh of unmilked kids.*
GOATHERD. *Shepherd, thy lay is as the noise of streams*
*Falling and falling aye from yon tall crag.*
*If for their meed the Muses claim the ewe,*
*Be thine the stall-fed lamb; or if they choose*
*The lamb, take thou the scarce less-valued ewe.*
THYRSIS. *Pray, by the Nymphs, pray, Goatherd, seat thee here*
*Against this hill-slope in the tamarisk shade,*

*And pipe me somewhat, while I guard thy goats.*
GOATHERD. *I durst not, Shepherd, O I durst not pipe*
*At noontide; fearing Pan, who at that hour*
*Rests from the toils of hunting. Harsh is he;*
*Wrath at his nostrils aye sits sentinel.*
*But, Thyrsis, thou canst sing of Daphnis' woes;*
*High is thy name for woodland minstrelsy:*
*Then rest we in the shadow of the elm*
*Fronting Priapus and the Fountain-nymphs.*
*There, where the oaks are and the Shepherd's seat,*
*Sing as thou sang'st erewhile, when matched with him*
*Of Libya, Chromis; and I'll give thee, first,*
*To milk, ay thrice, a goat — she suckles twins,*
*Yet ne'ertheless can fill two milkpails full;—*
*Next, a deep drinking-cup, with sweet wax scoured,*
*Two-handled, newly-carven, smacking yet*
*O' the chisel. Ivy reaches up and climbs*
*About its lip, gilt here and there with sprays*
*Of woodbine, that enwreathed about it flaunts*
*Her saffron fruitage. Framed therein appears*
*A damsel ('t is a miracle of art)*
*In robe and snood: and suitors at her side*
*With locks fair-flowing, on her right and left,*
*Battle with words, that fail to reach her heart.*
*She, laughing, glances now on this, flings now*
*Her chance regards on that: they, all for love*

*Wearied and eye-swoln, find their labour lost.*
*Carven elsewhere an ancient fisher stands*
*On the rough rocks: thereto the old man with pains*
*Drags his great casting-net, as one that toils*
*Full stoutly: every fibre of his frame*
*Seems fishing; so about the gray-beard's neck*
*(In might a youngster yet) the sinews swell.*
*Hard by that wave-beat sire a vineyard bends*
*Beneath its graceful load of burnished grapes;*
*A boy sits on the rude fence watching them.*
*Near him two foxes: down the rows of grapes*
*One ranging steals the ripest; one assails*
*With wiles the poor lad's scrip, to leave him soon*
*Stranded and supperless. He plaits meanwhile*
*With ears of corn a right fine cricket-trap,*
*And fits it on a rush: for vines, for scrip,*
*Little he cares, enamoured of his toy.*
*The cup is hung all round with lissom briar,*
*Triumph of Æolian art, a wondrous sight.*
*It was a ferryman's of Calydon:*
*A goat it cost me, and a great white cheese.*
*Ne'er yet my lips came near it, virgin still*
*It stands. And welcome to such boon art thou,*
*If for my sake thou'lt sing that lay of lays.*
*I jest not: up, lad, sing: no songs thou'lt own*
*In the dim land where all things are forgot.*

THYRSIS [*sings*]. *Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*

*The voice of Thyrsis. Ætna's Thyrsis I.*
*Where were ye, Nymphs, oh where, while Daphnis pined?*
*In fair Penëus' or in Pindus' glens?*
*For great Anapus' stream was not your haunt,*
*Nor Ætna's cliff, nor Acis' sacred rill.*
*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*O'er him the wolves, the jackals howled o'er him;*
*The lion in the oak-copse mourned his death.*
*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*The kine and oxen stood around his feet,*
*The heifers and the calves wailed all for him.*
*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*First from the mountain Hermes came, and said,*
*"Daphnis, who frets thee? Lad, whom lov'st thou so?"*
*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*Came herdsmen, shepherds came, and goatherds came;*
*All asked what ailed the lad. Priapus came*
*And said, "Why pine, poor Daphnis? while the maid*
*Foots it round every pool and every grove,*
*(Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song)*
*"O lack-love and perverse, in quest of thee;*
*Herdsman in name, but goatherd rightlier called.*
*With eyes that yearn the goatherd marks his kids*
*Run riot, for he fain would frisk as they:*

*(Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song)*
*"With eyes that yearn dost thou too mark the laugh*
*Of maidens, for thou may'st not share their glee."*
*Still naught the herdsman said: he drained alone*
*His bitter portion, till the fatal end.*

*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*Came Aphroditè, smiles on her sweet face,*
*False smiles, for heavy was her heart, and spake:*
*"So, Daphnis, thou must try a fall with Love!*
*But stalwart Love hath won the fall of thee."*

*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*Then "Ruthless Aphroditè," Daphnis said,*
*"Accursed Aphroditè, foe to man!*
*Say'st thou mine hour is come, my sun hath set?*
*Dead as alive, shall Daphnis work Love woe.*

*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*"Fly to Mount Ida, where the swain (men say)*
*And Aphroditè—to Anchises fly:*
*There are oak-forests; here but galingale,*
*And bees that make a music round the hives.*

*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*"Adonis owed his bloom to tending flocks*
*And smiting hares, and bringing wild beasts down.*

*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*"Face once more Diomed: tell him 'I have slain*
*The herdsman Daphnis; now I challenge thee.'*

*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*"Farewell, wolf, jackal, mountain-prisoned bear!*
*Ye'll see no more by grove or glade or glen*
*Your herdsman Daphnis! Arethuse, farewell,*
*And the bright streams that pour down Thymbris' side.*
*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*"I am that Daphnis, who lead here my kine,*
*Bring here to drink my oxen and my calves.*
*Begin, sweet Maids, begin the woodland song.*
*" Pan, Pan, oh whether great Lyceum's crags*
*Thou haunt'st to-day, or mightier Mænalus,*
*Come to the Sicel isle! Abandon now*
*Rhium and Helicè, and the mountain-cairn*
*(That e'en gods cherish) of Lycaon's son!*
*Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.*
*" Come, king of song, o'er this my pipe, compact*
*With wax and honey-breathing, arch thy lip:*
*For surely I am torn from life by Love.*
*Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song.*
*" From thicket now and thorn let violets spring,*
*Now let white lilies drape the juniper,*
*And pines grow figs, and nature all go wrong:*
*For Daphnis dies. Let deer pursue the hounds,*
*And mountain-owls outsing the nightingale.*
*Forget, sweet Maids, forget your woodland song."*

*So spake he, and he never spake again.*
*Fain Aphroditè would have raised his head;*
*But all his thread was spun. So down the stream*
*Went Daphnis: closed the waters o'er a head*
*Dear to the Nine, of nymphs not unbeloved.*
*Now give me goat and cup; that I may milk*
*The one, and pour the other to the Muse.*
*Fare ye well, Muses, o'er and o'er farewell!*
*I'll sing strains lovelier yet in days to be.*
GOATHERD. *Thyrsis, let honey and the honeycomb*
*Fill thy sweet mouth, and figs of Ægilus:*
*For ne'er cicala trilled so sweet a song.*
*Here is the cup: mark, friend, how sweet it smells:*
*The Hours, thou'lt say, have washed it in their well.*
*Hither, Cissætha! Thou, go milk her! Kids,*
*Be steady, or your pranks will rouse the ram.*

# *IDYLL II*

## THE SORCERESS

*Where are the bay-leaves, Thestylis, and the charms?*
*Fetch all; with fiery wool the caldron crown;*
*Let glamour win me back my false lord's heart!*
*Twelve days the wretch hath not come nigh to me,*
*Nor made inquiry if I die or live,*
*Nor clamoured (oh unkindness!) at my door.*
*Sure his swift fancy wanders otherwhere,*
*The slave of Aphroditè and of Love.*
*I'm off to Timagetus' wrestling-school*
*At dawn, that I may see him and denounce*
*His doings; but I'll charm him now with charms.*
*So shine out fair, O moon! To thee I sing*
*My soft low song: to thee and Hecatè*
*The dweller in the shades, at whose approach*
*E'en the dogs quake, as on she moves through blood*
*And darkness and the barrows of the slain.*
*All hail, dread Hecatè: companion me*
*Unto the end, and work me witcheries*
*Potent as Circè or Medea wrought,*
*Or Perimedè of the golden hair!*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*First we ignite the grain. Nay, pile it on:*

*Where are thy wits flown, timorous Thestylis?*
*Shall I be flouted, I, by such as thou?*
*Pile, and still say, "This pile is of his bones."*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*Delphis racks me: I burn him in these bays.*
*As, flame-enkindled, they lift up their voice,*
*Blaze once, and not a trace is left behind:*
*So waste his flesh to powder in yon fire!*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*E'en as I melt, not uninspired, the wax,*
*May Mindian Delphis melt this hour with love:*
*And, swiftly as this brazen wheel whirls round,*
*May Aphroditè whirl him to my door.*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*Next burn the husks. Hell's adamantine floor*
*And aught that else stands firm can Artemis move.*
*Thestylis, the hounds bay up and down the town:*
*The goddess stands i' the crossroads: sound the gongs.*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*Hushed are the voices of the winds and seas;*
*But O not hushed the voice of my despair.*
*He burns my being up, who left me here*
*No wife, no maiden, in my misery.*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*Thrice I pour out; speak thrice, sweet mistress, thus:*
*"What face soe'er hangs o'er him be forgot*

*Clean as, in Dia, Theseus (legends say)*
*Forgat his Ariadne's locks of love."*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*The coltsfoot grows in Arcady, the weed*
*That drives the mountain-colts and swift mares wild.*
*Like them may Delphis rave: so, maniac-wise,*
*Race from his burnished brethren home to me.*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*He lost this tassel from his robe; which I*
*Shred thus, and cast it on the raging flames.*
*Ah baleful Love! why, like the marsh-born leech,*
*Cling to my flesh, and drain my dark veins dry?*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
*From a crushed eft to-morrow he shall drink*
*Death! But now, Thestylis, take these herbs and smear*
*That threshold o'er, whereto at heart I cling*
*Still, still—albeit he thinks scorn of me—*
*And spit, and say, "'T is Delphis' bones I smear."*
*Turn, magic wheel, draw homeward him I love.*
[*Exit Thestylis.*
*Now, all alone, I'll weep a love whence sprung,*
*When born? Who wrought my sorrow? Anaxo came,*
*Her basket in her hand, to Artemis' grove.*
*Bound for the festival, troops of forest beasts*
*Stood round, and in the midst a lioness.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*

*Theucharidas' slave, my Thracian nurse now dead,*
*Then my near neighbour, prayed me and implored*
*To see the pageant: I, the poor doomed thing,*
*Went with her, trailing a fine silken train,*
*And gathering round me Clearista's robe.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*Now, the mid-highway reached by Lycon's farm,*
*Delphis and Eudamippus passed me by.*
*With beards as lustrous as the woodbine's gold*
*And breasts more sheeny than thyself, O Moon,*
*Fresh from the wrestler's glorious toil they came.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*I saw, I raved, smit (weakling) to my heart.*
*My beauty withered, and I cared no more*
*For all that pomp; and how I gained my home*
*I know not: some strange fever wasted me.*
*Ten nights and days I lay upon my bed.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*And wan became my flesh, as 't had been dyed,*
*And all my hair streamed off, and there was left*
*But bones and skin. Whose threshold crossed I not,*
*Or missed what grandam's hut who dealt in charms?*
*For no light thing was this, and time sped on.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*At last I spake the truth to that my maid:*
*"Seek, an thou canst, some cure for my sore pain.*

*Alas, I am all the Mindian's! But begone,*
*And watch by Timagetus' wrestling-school:*
*There doth he haunt, there soothly take his rest.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*"Find him alone: nod softly: say, 'she waits;'*
*And bring him." So I spake: she went her way,*
*And brought the lustrous-limbed one to my roof.*
*And I, the instant I beheld him step*
*Lightfooted o'er the threshold of my door,*
*(Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love,)*
*Became all cold like snow, and from my brow*
*Brake the damp dewdrops: utterance I had none,*
*Not e'en such utterance as a babe may make*
*That babbles to its mother in its dreams;*
*But all my fair frame stiffened into wax.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*He bent his pitiless eyes on me; looked down,*
*And sate him on my couch, and sitting, said:*
*"Thou hast gained on me, Simætha, (e'en as I*
*Gained once on young Philinus in the race,)*
*Bidding me hither ere I came unasked.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*"For I had come, by Eros I had come,*
*This night, with comrades twain or may-be more,*
*The fruitage of the Wine-god in my robe,*
*And, wound about my brow with ribands red,*

*The silver leaves so dear to Heracles.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*"Had ye said 'Enter,' well: for 'mid my peers*
*High is my name for goodliness and speed:*
*I had kissed that sweet mouth once and gone my way.*
*But had the door been barred, and I thrust out,*
*With brand and axe would we have stormed ye then.*
*Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.*
*"Now be my thanks recorded, first to Love,*
*Next to thee, maiden, who didst pluck me out,*
*A half-burned helpless creature, from the flames,*
*And badst me hither. It is Love that lights*
*A fire more fierce than his of Lipara;*
*(Bethink thee, mistress Moon, whence came my love.)*
*"Scares, mischief-mad, the maiden from her bower,*
*The bride from her warm couch." He spake: and I,*
*A willing listener, sat, my hand in his,*
*Among the cushions, and his cheek touched mine,*
*Each hotter than its wont, and we discoursed*
*In soft low language. Need I prate to thee,*
*Sweet Moon, of all we said and all we did?*
*Till yesterday he found no fault with me,*
*Nor I with him. But lo, to-day there came*
*Philista's mother — hers who flutes to me —*
*With her Melampo's; just when up the sky*
*Gallop the mares that chariot rose-limbed Dawn:*

*And divers tales she brought me, with the rest*
*How Delphis loved, she knew not rightly whom:*
*But this she knew; that of the rich wine aye*
*He poured "to Love;" and at the last had fled,*
*To line, she deemed, the fair one's hall with flowers.*
*Such was my visitor's tale, and it was true:*
*For thrice, nay four times, daily he would stroll*
*Hither, leave here full oft his Dorian flask:*
*Now—'t is a fortnight since I saw his face.*
*Doth he then treasure something sweet elsewhere?*
*Am I forgot? I 'll charm him now with charms.*
*But let him try me more, and by the Fates*
*He 'll soon be knocking at the gates of hell.*
*Spells of such power are in this chest of mine,*
*Learned, lady, from mine host in Palestine.*

*Lady, farewell: turn ocean-ward thy steeds:*
*As I have purposed, so shall I fulfil.*
*Farewell, thou bright-faced Moon! Ye stars, farewell,*
*That wait upon the car of noiseless Night.*

# *IDYLL III*

## THE SERENADE

*I pipe to Amaryllis; while my goats,*
*Tityrus their guardian, browse along the fell.*
*O Tityrus, as I love thee, feed my goats:*
*And lead them to the spring, and, Tityrus, 'ware*
*The lifted crest of yon gray Libyan ram.*
*Ah winsome Amaryllis! Why no more*
*Greet'st thou thy darling, from the caverned rock*
*Peeping all coyly? Think'st thou scorn of him?*
*Hath a near view revealed him satyr-shaped*
*Of chin and nostril? I shall hang me soon.*
*See here ten apples: from thy favourite tree*
*I plucked them: I shall bring ten more anon.*
*Ah witness my heart-anguish! Oh were I*
*A booming bee, to waft me to thy lair,*
*Threading the fern and ivy in whose depths*
*Thou nestlest! I have learned what Love is now:*
*Fell god, he drank the lioness's milk,*
*In the wild woods his mother cradled him,*
*Whose fire slow-burns me, smiting to the bone.*
*O thou whose glance is beauty and whose heart*
*All marble: O dark-eyebrowed maiden mine!*
*Cling to thy goatherd, let him kiss thy lips,*
*For there is sweetness in an empty kiss.*

*Thou wilt not? Piecemeal I will rend the crown,*
*The ivy-crown which, dear, I guard for thee,*
*Inwov'n with scented parsley and with flowers:*
*Oh I am desperate—what betides me, what?—*
*Still art thou deaf? I'll doff my coat of skins*
*And leap into yon waves, where on the watch*
*For mackerel Olpis sits: tho' I 'scape death,*
*That I have all but died will pleasure thee.*
*That learned I when (I murmuring "loves she me?")*
*The Love-in-absence, crushed, returned no sound,*
*But shrank and shrivelled on my smooth young wrist.*
*I learned it of the sieve-divining crone*
*Who gleaned behind the reapers yesterday:*
*"Thou 'rt wrapt up all," Agraia said, "in her;*
*She makes of none account her worshipper."*
*Lo! a white goat, and twins, I keep for thee:*
*Mermnon's lass covets them: dark she is of skin:*
*But yet hers be they; thou but foolest me.*
*She cometh, by the quivering of mine eye.*
*I'll lean against the pine-tree here and sing.*
*She may look round: she is not adamant.*

[*Sings*] *Hippomenes, when he a maid would wed,*
*Took apples in his hand and on he sped.*
*Famed Atalanta's heart was won by this;*
*She marked, and maddening sank in Love's abyss.*

*From Othrys did the seer Melampus stray*
*To Pylos with his herd: and lo there lay*
*In a swain's arms a maid of beauty rare;*
*Alphesibœa, wise of heart, she bare.*

*Did not Adonis rouse to such excess*
*Of frenzy her whose name is Loveliness,*
*(He a mere lad whose wethers grazed the hill)*
*That, dead, he's pillowed on her bosom still?*

*Endymion sleeps the sleep that changeth not:*
*And, maiden mine, I envy him his lot!*
*Envy Iasion's: his it was to gain*
*Bliss that I dare not breathe in ears profane.*

*My head aches. What reck'st thou? I sing no more:*
*E'en where I fell I'll lie, until the wolves*
*Rend me—may that be honey in thy mouth!*

# *IDYLL IV*

## THE HERDSMEN

BATTUS CORYDON

BATTUS. *Who owns these cattle, Corydon? Philondas? Prythee say.*

CORYDON. *No, Ægon: and he gave them me to tend while he's away.*

BATTUS. *Dost milk them in the gloaming, when none is nigh to see?*

CORYDON. *The old man brings the calves to suck, and keeps an eye on me.*

BATTUS. *And to what region then hath flown the cattle's rightful lord?*

CORYDON. *Hast thou not heard? With Milo he vanished Elisward.*

BATTUS. *How! was the wrestler's oil e'er yet so much as seen by him?*

CORYDON. *Men say he rivals Heracles in lustiness of limb.*

BATTUS. *I'm Polydeuces' match (or so my mother says) and more.*

CORYDON.—*So off he started; with a spade, and of these ewes a score.*

BATTUS. *This Milo will be teaching wolves how they should raven next.*

CORYDON.—*And by these bellowings his kine proclaim how sore they're vexed.*

BATTUS. *Poor kine! they've found their master a sorry knave indeed.*

CORYDON. *They're poor enough, I grant you: they have not heart to feed.*

BATTUS. *Look at that heifer! sure there's naught, save bare bones, left of her.*

*Pray, does she browse on dewdrops, as doth the grasshopper?*

CORYDON. *Not she, by heaven! She pastures now by Æsarus' glades,*

*And handfuls fair I pluck her there of young and green grass-blades;*

*Now bounds about Latymnus, that gathering-place of shades.*

BATTUS. *That bull again, the red one, my word but he is lean!*

*I wish the Sybarite burghers aye may offer to the queen*

*Of heaven as pitiful a beast: those burghers are so mean!*

CORYDON. *Yet to the Salt Lake's edges I drive him, I can swear;*

*Up Physcus, up Neæthus' side—he lacks not victual there*

*With dittany and endive and foxglove for his fare.*

BATTUS. *Well, well! I pity Ægon. His cattle, go they must*
*To rack and ruin, all because vain-glory was his lust.*
*The pipe that erst he fashioned is doubtless scored with rust?*

CORYDON. *Nay, by the Nymphs! That pipe he left to me, the selfsame day*
*He made for Pisa: I am too a minstrel in my way:*
*Well the flute-part in "Pyrrhus" and in "Glauca" can I play.*
*I sing too "Here 's to Croton" and "Zacynthus O 't is fair,"*
*And "Eastward to Lacinium:"—the bruiser Milo there*
*His single self ate eighty loaves; there also did he pull*
*Down from its mountain-dwelling, by one hoof grasped, a bull,*
*And gave it Amaryllis: the maidens screamed with fright;*
*As for the owner of the bull, he only laughed outright.*

BATTUS. *Sweet Amaryllis! thou alone, though dead, art unforgot.*
*Dearer than thou, whose light is quenched, my very goats are not.*
*Oh for the all-unkindly fate that's fallen to my lot!*

CORYDON. *Cheer up, brave lad! to-morrow may ease*
*thee of thy pain:*
*Aye for the living are there hopes, past hoping are the*
*slain:*
*And now Zeus sends us sunshine, and now he sends us*
*rain.*
BATTUS. *I'm better. Beat those young ones off! E'en*
*now their teeth attack*
*That olive's shoots, the graceless brutes! Back, with*
*your white face, back!*
CORYDON. *Back to thy hill, Cymætha! Great Pan,*
*how deaf thou art!*
*I shall be with thee presently, and in the end thou'lt*
*smart.*
*I warn thee, keep thy distance. Look, up she creeps*
*again!*
*Oh were my hare-crook in my hand, I'd give it to her*
*then!*
BATTUS. *For heaven's sake, Corydon, look here! Just*
*now a bramble-spike*
*Ran, there, into my instep—and oh how deep they strike,*
*Those lancewood-shafts! A murrain light on that calf,*
*I say!*
*I got it gaping after her. Canst thou discern it, pray?*
CORYDON. *Ay, ay; and here I have it, safe in my*
*finger-nails.*

BATTUS. *Eh! at how slight a matter how tall a warrior quails!*

CORYDON. *Ne'er range the hill-crest, Battus, all sandal-less and bare:*
*Because the thistle and the thorn lift aye their plumed heads there.*

BATTUS.—*Say, Corydon, does that old man we wot of (tell me, please!)*
*Still haunt the dark-browed little girl whom once he used to tease?*

CORYDON. *Ay my poor boy, that doth he: I saw them yesterday*
*Down by the byre; and, trust me, loving enough were they.*

BATTUS. *Well done, my veteran light-o'-love! In deeming thee mere man,*
*I wronged thy sire: some Satyr he, or an uncouth-limbed Pan.*

# *IDYLL V*

## THE BATTLE OF THE BARDS

COMATAS LACON

MORSON

COMATAS. *Goats, from a shepherd who stands here,*
*from Lacon, keep away:*
*Sibyrtas owns him; and he stole my goatskin yesterday.*
LACON. *Hi! lambs! avoid yon fountain. Have ye not*
*eyes to see*
*Comatas, him who filched a pipe but two days back*
*from me?*
COMATAS. *Sibyrtas' bondsman own a pipe? whence*
*gotst thou that, and how?*
*Tootling through straws with Corydon mayhap's*
*beneath thee now?*
LACON. *'T was Lycon's gift, your highness. But pray,*
*Comatas, say,*
*What is that skin wherewith thou saidst that Lacon*
*walked away?*
*Why, thy lord's self had ne'er a skin whereon his limbs*
*to lay.*
COMATAS. *The skin that Crocylus gave me, a dark one*
*streaked with white,*

*The day he slew his she-goat. Why, thou wert ill with spite,*
*Then, my false friend; and thou would'st end by beggaring me quite.*

LACON. *Did Lacon, did Calæthis' son purloin a goat-skin? No,*
*By Pan that haunts the sea-beach! Lad, if I served thee so,*
*Crazed may I drop from yon hill-top to Crathis' stream below!*

COMATAS. *Nor pipe of thine, good fellow—the Ladies of the Lake*
*So be still kind and good to me—did e'er Comatas take.*

LACON. *Be Daphnis' woes my portion, should that my credence win!*
*Still, if thou list to stake a kid—that surely were no sin—*
*Come on, I'll sing it out with thee—until thou givest in.*

COMATAS. *"The hog he braved Athene." As for the kid, 't is there:*
*You stake a lamb against him—that fat one—if you dare.*

LACON. *Fox! were that fair for either? At shearing who 'd prefer*

*Horsehair to wool? or when the goat stood handy,*
*suffer her*
*To nurse her firstling, and himself go milk a blatant cur?*
COMATAS. *The same who deemed his hornet's-buzz*
*the true cicala's note,*
*And braved—like you—his better. And so forsooth*
*you vote*
*My kid a trifle? Then come on, fellow! I stake the goat.*
LACON. *Why be so hot? Art thou on fire? First prythee*
*take thy seat*
*'Neath this wild woodland olive: thy tones will sound*
*more sweet.*
*Here falls a cold rill drop by drop, and green grass-*
*blades uprear*
*Their heads, and fallen leaves are thick, and locusts*
*prattle here.*
COMATAS. *Hot I am not; but hurt I am, and sorely,*
*when I think*
*That thou canst look me in the face and never bleach nor*
*blink—*
*Me, thine own boyhood's tutor! Go, train the she-wolf's*
*brood;*
*Train dogs—that they may rend thee! This, this is*
*gratitude!*
LACON. *When learned I from thy practice or thy*
*preaching aught that's right,*

*Thou puppet, thou misshapen lump of ugliness and spite?*

COMATAS. *When? When I beat thee, wailing sore: yon goats looked on with glee,*
*And bleated; and were dealt with e'en as I had dealt with thee.*

LACON. *Well, hunchback, shallow be thy grave as was thy judgment then!*
*But hither, hither! Thou'lt not dip in herdsman's lore again.*

COMATAS. *Nay, here are oaks and galingale: the hum of housing bees*
*Makes the place pleasant, and the birds are piping in the trees.*
*And here are two cold streamlets; here deeper shadows fall*
*Than yon place owns, and look what cones drop from the pine-tree tall.*

LACON. *Come hither, and tread on lambswool that is soft as any dream:*
*Still more unsavoury than thyself to me thy goatskins seem.*
*Here will I plant a bowl of milk, our ladies' grace to win;*
*And one, as huge, beside it, sweet olive-oil therein.*

COMATAS. *Come hither, and trample dainty fern and poppy-blossom: sleep*

*On goatskins that are softer than thy fleeces piled three deep.*
*Here will I plant eight milkpails, great Pan's regard to gain,*
*Round them eight cups: full honeycombs shall every cup contain.*

LACON. *Well! There essay thy woodcraft: thence fight me, never budge*
*From thine own oak; e'en have thy way. But who shall be our judge?*
*Oh, if Lycopas with his kine should chance this way to trudge!*

COMATAS. *Nay, I want no Lycopas. But hail yon woodsman, do:*
*'Tis Morson—see! his arms are full of bracken—there, by you.*

LACON. *We'll hail him.*

COMATAS. *Ay, you hail him.*

LACON. *Friend, 't will not take thee long:*
*We're striving which is master, we twain, in woodland song:*
*And thou, my good friend Morson, ne'er look with favouring eyes*
*On me; nor yet to yonder lad be fain to judge the prize.*

COMATAS. *Nay, by the Nymphs, sweet Morson, ne'er for Comatas' sake*

*Stretch thou a point; nor e'er let him undue advantage take.*

*Sibyrtas owns yon wethers; a Thurian is he:*

*And here, my friend, Eumares' goats, of Sybaris, you may see.*

LACON. *And who asked thee, thou naughty knave, to whom belonged these flocks,*

*Sibyrtas, or (it might be) me? Eh, thou'rt a chatterbox!*

COMATAS. *The simple truth, most worshipful, is all that I allege:*

*I'm not for boasting. But thy wit hath all too keen an edge.*

LACON. *Come sing, if singing 's in thee—and may our friend get back*

*To town alive! Heaven help us, lad, how thy tongue doth clack!*

COMATAS [*sings*]. *Daphnis the mighty minstrel was less precious to the Nine*

*Than I. I offered yesterday two kids upon their shrine.*

LACON [*sings*]. *Ay, but Apollo fancies me hugely: for him I rear*

*A lordly ram: and, look you, the Carnival is near.*

COMATAS. *Twin kids hath every goat I milk, save two. My maid, my own,*

*Eyes me and asks "At milking time, rogue, art thou all alone?"*

LACON. *Go to! nigh twenty baskets doth Lacon fill with cheese:*
*Hath time to woo a sweetheart too upon the blossomed leas.*
COMATAS. *Clarissa pelts her goatherd with apples, should he stray*
*By with his goats; and pouts her lip in a quaint charming way.*
LACON. *Me too a darling smooth of face notes as I tend my flocks:*
*How maddeningly o'er that fair neck ripple those shining locks!*
COMATAS. *Tho' dogrose and anemone are fair in their degree*
*The rose that blooms by garden-walls still is the rose for me.*
LACON. *Tho' acorns' cups are fair, their taste is bitterness, and still*
*I'll choose, for honeysweet are they, the apples of the hill.*
COMATAS. *A cushat I will presently procure and give to her*
*Who loves me: I know where it sits, up in the juniper.*
LACON. *Pooh! a soft fleece, to make a coat, I'll give the day I shear*
*My brindled ewe—(no hand but mine shall touch it)—to my dear.*

COMATAS. *Back, lambs, from that wild-olive: and be content to browse*
*Here on the shoulder of the hill, beneath the myrtle boughs.*
LACON. *Run, (will ye?) Ball and Dogstar, down from that oak tree, run:*
*And feed where Spot is feeding, and catch the morning sun.*
COMATAS. *I have a bowl of cypress-wood: I have besides a cup:*
*Praxiteles designed them: for her they 're treasured up.*
LACON. *I have a dog who throttles wolves: he loves the sheep, and they*
*Love him: I'll give him to my dear, to keep wild beasts at bay.*
COMATAS. *Ye locusts that o'erleap my fence, oh let my vines escape*
*Your clutches, I beseech you: the bloom is on the grape.*
LACON. *Ye crickets, mark how nettled our friend the goatherd is!*
*I ween, ye cost the reapers pangs as acute as his.*
COMATAS. *Those foxes with their bushy tails, I hate to see them crawl*
*Round Micon's homestead and purloin his grapes at evenfall.*
LACON. *I hate to see the beetles that come warping on the wind,*

*And climb Philondas' trees, and leave never a fig behind.*

COMATAS. *Have you forgot that cudgelling I gave you? At each stroke*
*You grinned and twisted with a grace, and clung to yonder oak.*

LACON. *That I've forgot—but I have not, how once Eumares tied*
*You to that selfsame oak-trunk, and tanned your unclean hide.*

COMATAS. *There's some one ill—of heartburn. You note it, I presume,*
*Morson? Go quick, and fetch a squill from some old beldam's tomb.*

LACON. *I think I'm stinging somebody, as Morson too perceives—*
*Go to the river and dig up a clump of sowbread-leaves.*

COMATAS. *May Himera flow, not water, but milk: and may'st thou blush,*
*Crathis, with wine; and fruitage grow upon every rush.*

LACON. *For me may Sybaris' fountain flow, pure honey: so that you,*
*My fair, may dip your pitcher each morn in honey-dew.*

COMATAS. *My goats are fed on clover and goat's-delight: they tread*
*On lentisk leaves; or lie them down, ripe strawberries o'er their head.*

LACON. *My sheep crop honeysuckle bloom, while all around them blows*
*In clusters rich the jasmine, as brave as any rose.*
COMATAS. *I scorn my maid; for when she took my cushat, she did not*
*Draw with both hands my face to hers and kiss me on the spot.*
LACON. *I love my love, and hugely: for, when I gave my flute,*
*I was rewarded with a kiss, a loving one to boot.*
COMATAS. *Lacon, the nightingale should scarce be challenged by the jay,*
*Nor swan by hoopoe: but, poor boy, thou aye wert for a fray.*
MORSON. *I bid the shepherd hold his peace. Comatas, unto you*
*I, Morson, do adjudge the lamb. You'll first make offering due*
*Unto the nymphs: then savoury meat you'll send to Morson too.*
COMATAS. *By Pan I will! Snort, all my herd of he-goats: I shall now*
*O'er Lacon, shepherd as he is, crow ye shall soon see how.*
*I've won, and I could leap sky-high! Ye also dance and skip,*

*My hornèd ewes: in Sybaris' fount to-morrow all shall*
*dip.*
*Ho! you, sir, with the glossy coat and dangerous crest;*
*you dare*
*Look at a ewe, till I have slain my lamb, and ill you'll*
*fare.*
*What! is he at his tricks again? He is, and he will get*
*(Or my name's not Comatas), a proper pounding yet.*

# *IDYLL VI*

## THE DRAWN BATTLE

DAPHNIS DAMŒTAS

*Daphnis the herdsman and Damœtas once*
*Had driven, Aratus, to the selfsame glen.*
*One chin was yellowing, one showed half a beard.*
*And by a brookside on a summer noon*
*The pair sat down and sang; but Daphnis led*
*The song, for Daphnis was the challenger.*
DAPHNIS. *See! Galatea pelts thy flock with fruit,*
*And calls their master 'Lack-love,' Polypheme.*
*Thou mark'st her not, blind, blind, but pipest aye*
*Thy wood-notes. See again, she smites thy dog:*
*Sea-ward the fleeced flocks' sentinel peers and barks,*
*And, through the clear wave visible to her still,*
*Careers along the gently babbling beach.*
*Look that he leap not on the maid new-risen*
*From her sea-bath and rend her dainty limbs.*
*She fools thee, near or far, like thistle-waifs*
*In hot sweet summer: flies from thee when wooed,*
*Unwooed pursues thee: risks all moves to win;*
*For, Polypheme, things foul seem fair to Love.*
*And then, due prelude made, Damœtas sang.*

DAMŒTAS. *I marked her pelt my dog, I was not blind,*
*By Pan, by this my one my precious eye*
*That bounds my vision now and evermore!*
*But Telemus the Seer, be his the woe,*
*His and his children's, that he promised me!*
*Yet do I too tease her; I pass her by,*
*Pretend to woo another:—and she hears*
*(Heaven help me!) and is faint with jealousy;*
*And hurrying from the sea-wave as if stung,*
*Scans with keen glance my grotto and my flock.*
*'T was I hissed on the dog to bark at her;*
*For, when I loved her, he would whine and lay*
*His muzzle in her lap. These things she'll note*
*Mayhap, and message send on message soon:*
*But I will bar my door until she swear*
*To make me on this isle fair bridal-bed.*
*And I am less unlovely than men say.*
*I looked into the mere (the mere was calm),*
*And goodly seemed my beard, and goodly seemed*
*My solitary eye, and, half-revealed,*
*My teeth gleamed whiter than the Parian marl.*
*Thrice for good luck I spat upon my robe:*
*That learned I of the hag Cottytaris—her*
*Who fluted lately with Hippocoön's mowers.*

*Damœtas then kissed Daphnis lovingly:*
*One gave a pipe and one a goodly flute.*
*Straight to the shepherd's flute and herdsman's pipe*
*The younglings bounded in the soft green grass:*
*And neither was o'ermatched, but matchless both.*

# *IDYLL VII*

## HARVEST-HOME

*Once on a time did Eucritus and I*
*(With us Amyntas) to the riverside*
*Steal from the city. For Lycopeus' sons*
*Were that day busy with the harvest-home,*
*Antigenes and Phrasidemus, sprung*
*(If aught thou holdest by the good old names)*
*By Clytia from great Chalcon—him who erst*
*Planted one stalwart knee against the rock,*
*And lo, beneath his foot Burinè's rill*
*Brake forth, and at its side poplar and elm*
*Showed aisles of pleasant shadow, greenly roofed*
*By tufted leaves. Scarce midway were we now,*
*Nor yet descried the tomb of Brasilas:*
*When, thanks be to the Muses, there drew near*
*A wayfarer from Crete, young Lycidas.*
*The horned herd was his care: a glance might tell*
*So much: for every inch a herdsman he.*
*Slung o'er his shoulder was a ruddy hide*
*Torn from a he-goat, shaggy, tangle-haired,*
*That reeked of rennet yet: a broad belt clasped*
*A patched cloak round his breast, and for a staff*
*A gnarled wild-olive bough his right hand bore.*

*Soon with a quiet smile he spoke—his eye*
*Twinkled, and laughter sat upon his lip:*
*"And whither ploddest thou thy weary way*
*Beneath the noontide sun, Simichidas?*
*For now the lizard sleeps upon the wall,*
*The crested lark folds now his wandering wing.*
*Dost speed, a bidden guest, to some reveller's board?*
*Or townward to the treading of the grape?*
*For lo! recoiling from thy hurrying feet*
*The pavement-stones ring out right merrily."*
*Then I: "Friend Lycid, all men say that none*
*Of haymakers or herdsmen is thy match*
*At piping: and my soul is glad thereat.*
*Yet, to speak sooth, I think to rival thee.*
*Now look, this road holds holiday to-day:*
*For banded brethren solemnise a feast*
*To richly-dight Demeter, thanking her*
*For her good gifts: since with no grudging hand*
*Hath the boon goddess filled the wheaten floors.*
*So come: the way, the day, is thine as mine:*
*Try we our woodcraft—each may learn from each.*
*I am, as thou, a clarion-voice of song;*
*All hail me chief of minstrels. But I am not,*
*Heaven knows, o'ercredulous: no, I scarce can yet*
*(I think) outvie Philetas, nor the bard*
*Of Samos, champion of Sicilian song.*

*They are as cicadas challenged by a frog."*

*I spake to gain mine ends; and laughing light*
*He said: "Accept this club, as thou 'rt indeed*
*A born truth-teller, shaped by heaven's own hand!*
*I hate your builders who would rear a house*
*High as Oromedon's mountain-pinnacle:*
*I hate your song-birds too, whose cuckoo-cry*
*Struggles (in vain) to match the Chian bard.*
*But come, we 'll sing forthwith, Simichidas,*
*Our woodland music: and for my part I—*
*List, comrade, if you like the simple air*
*I forged among the uplands yesterday.*

*[Sings] Safe be my true-love convoyed o'er the main*
*To Mitylene—though the southern blast*
*Chase the lithe waves, while westward slant the Kids,*
*Or low above the verge Orion stand—*
*If from Love's furnace she will rescue me,*
*For Lycidas is parched with hot desire.*
*Let halcyons lay the sea-waves and the winds,*
*Northwind and Westwind, that in shores far-off*
*Flutters the seaweed—halcyons, of all birds*
*Whose prey is on the waters, held most dear*
*By the green Nereids: yea let all things smile*
*On her to Mitylenè voyaging,*

*And in fair harbour may she ride at last.*
*I on that day, a chaplet woven of dill*
*Or rose or simple violet on my brow,*
*Will draw the wine of Pteleas from the cask*
*Stretched by the ingle. They shall roast me beans,*
*And elbow-deep in thyme and asphodel*
*And quaintly-curling parsley shall be piled*
*My bed of rushes, where in royal ease*
*I sit and, thinking of my darling, drain*
*With stedfast lip the liquor to the dregs.*
*I'll have a pair of pipers, shepherds both,*
*This from Acharnæ, from Lycopè that;*
*And Tityrus shall be near me and shall sing*
*How the swain Daphnis loved the stranger-maid;*
*And how he ranged the fells, and how the oaks*
*(Such oaks as Himera's banks are green withal)*
*Sang dirges o'er him waning fast away*
*Like snow on Athos, or on Hæmus high,*
*Or Rhodopè, or utmost Caucasus.*
*And he shall sing me how the big chest held*
*(All through the maniac malice of his lord)*
*A living goatherd: how the round-faced bees,*
*Lured from their meadow by the cedar-smell,*
*Fed him with daintiest flowers, because the Muse*
*Had made his throat a well-spring of sweet song.*
*Happy Comatas, this sweet lot was thine!*

*Thee the chest prisoned, for thee the honey-bees*
*Toiled, as thou slavedst out the mellowing year:*
*And oh hadst thou been numbered with the quick*
*In my day! I had led thy pretty goats*
*About the hill-side, listening to thy voice:*
*While thou hadst lain thee down 'neath oak or pine,*
*Divine Comatas, warbling pleasantly."*

*He spake and paused; and thereupon spake I.*
*"I too, friend Lycid, as I ranged the fells,*
*Have learned much lore and pleasant from the Nymphs,*
*Whose fame mayhap hath reached the throne of Zeus.*
*But this wherewith I'll grace thee ranks the first:*
*Thou listen, since the Muses like thee well.*

*[Sings] On me the young Loves sneezed: for hapless I*
*Am fain of Myrto as the goats of Spring.*
*But my best friend Aratus inly pines*
*For one who loves him not. Aristis saw—*
*(A wondrous seer is he, whose lute and lay*
*Shrinèd Apollo's self would scarce disdain)—*
*How love had scorched Aratus to the bone.*
*O Pan, who hauntest Homolè's fair champaign,*
*Bring the soft charmer, whosoe'er it be,*
*Unbid to his sweet arms—so, gracious Pan,*
*May ne'er thy ribs and shoulderblades be lashed*

*With squills by young Arcadians, whensoe'er*
*They are scant of supper! But should this my prayer*
*Mislike thee, then on nettles mayest thou sleep,*
*Dinted and sore all over from their claws!*
*Then mayest thou lodge amid Edonian hills*
*By Hebrus, in midwinter; there subsist,*
*The Bear thy neighbour; and, in summer, range*
*With the far Æthiops 'neath the Blemmyan rocks*
*Where Nile is no more seen! But O ye Loves,*
*Whose cheeks are like pink apples, quit your homes*
*By Hyetis, or Byblis' pleasant rill,*
*Or fair Dionè's rocky pedestal,*
*And strike that fair one with your arrows, strike*
*The ill-starred damsel who disdains my friend.*
*And lo, what is she but an o'er-ripe pear?*
*The girls all cry 'Her bloom is on the wane.'*
*We'll watch, Aratus, at that porch no more,*
*Nor waste shoe-leather: let the morning cock*
*Crow to wake others up to numb despair!*
*Let Molon, and none else, that ordeal brave:*
*While we make ease our study, and secure*
*Some witch, to charm all evil from our door."*

*I ceased. He smiling sweetly as before,*
*Gave me the staff, 'the Muses' parting gift,'*
*And leftward sloped tow'rd Pyxa. We the while*

*Bent us to Phrasydeme's, Eucritus and I,*
*And baby-faced Amyntas: there we lay*
*Half-buried in a couch of fragrant reed*
*And fresh-cut vineleaves, who so glad as we?*
*A wealth of elm and poplar shook o'erhead;*
*Hard by, a sacred spring flowed gurgling on*
*From the Nymphs' grot, and in the sombre boughs*
*The sweet cicada chirped laboriously.*
*Hid in the thick thorn-bushes far away*
*The treefrog's note was heard; the crested lark*
*Sang with the goldfinch; turtles made their moan,*
*And o'er the fountain hung the gilded bee.*
*All of rich summer smacked, of autumn all:*
*Pears at our feet, and apples at our side*
*Rolled in luxuriance; branches on the ground*
*Sprawled, overweighed with damsons; while we brushed*
*From the cask's head the crust of four long years.*
*Say, ye who dwell upon Parnassian peaks,*
*Nymphs of Castalia, did old Chiron e'er*
*Set before Heracles a cup so brave*
*In Pholus' cavern—did as nectarous draughts*
*Cause that Anapian shepherd, in whose hand*
*Rocks were as pebbles, Polypheme the strong,*
*Featly to foot it o'er the cottage lawns:—*
*As, ladies, ye bid flow that day for us*

*All by Demeter's shrine at harvest-home?*
*Beside whose cornstacks may I oft again*
*Plant my broad fan: while she stands by and smiles,*
*Poppies and cornsheaves on each laden arm.*

# *IDYLL VIII*

## THE TRIUMPH OF DAPHNIS

DAPHNIS MENALCAS

A GOATHERD

*Daphnis, the gentle herdsman, met once, as legend tells,*
*Menalcas making with his flock the circle of the fells.*
*Both chins were gilt with coming beards: both lads could*
*sing and play:*
*Menalcas glanced at Daphnis, and thus was heard to say:*
*"Art thou for singing, Daphnis, lord of the lowing kine?*
*I say my songs are better, by what thou wilt, than thine."*
*Then in his turn spake Daphnis, and thus he made reply:*
*"O shepherd of the fleecy flock, thou pipest clear and high;*
*But come what will, Menalcas, thou ne'er wilt sing*
*as I."*

MENALCAS. *This art thou fain to ascertain, and risk a bet with me?*

DAPHNIS. *This I full fain would ascertain, and risk a bet with thee.*

MENALCAS. *But what, for champions such as we, would seem a fitting prize?*

DAPHNIS. *I stake a calf: stake thou a lamb, its mother's self in size.*

MENALCAS. *A lamb I'll venture never: for aye at close of day*
*Father and mother count the flock, and passing strict are they.*
DAPHNIS. *Then what shall be the victor's fee? What wager wilt thou lay?*
MENALCAS. *A pipe discoursing through nine mouths I made, full fair to view;*
*The wax is white thereon, the line of this and that edge true.*
*I'll risk it: risk my father's own is more than I dare do.*
DAPHNIS. *A pipe discoursing through nine mouths, and fair, hath Daphnis too:*
*The wax is white thereon, the line of this and that edge true.*
*But yesterday I made it: this finger feels the pain*
*Still, where indeed the rifted reed hath cut it clean in twain.*
*But who shall be our umpire? who listen to our strain?*
MENALCAS. *Suppose we hail yon goatherd; him at whose horned herd now*
*The dog is barking—yonder dog with white upon his brow.*
*Then out they called: the goatherd marked them, and up came he;*
*Then out they sang; the goatherd their umpire fain would be.*

*To shrill Menalcas' lot it fell to start the woodland lay:*
*Then Daphnis took it up. And thus Menalcas led the way.*

MENALCAS. *"Rivers and vales, a glorious birth! Oh if*
*Menalcas e'er*
*Piped aught of pleasant music in your ears:*
*Then pasture, nothing loth, his lambs; and let young*
*Daphnis fare*
*No worse, should he stray hither with his steers."*
DAPHNIS. *"Pastures and rills, a bounteous race! If*
*Daphnis sang you e'er*
*Such songs as ne'er from nightingale have flowed;*
*Then to his herd your fatness lend; and let Menalcas*
*share*
*Like boon, should e'er he wend along this road."*
MENALCAS. *"'T is spring, 't is greenness everywhere;*
*with milk the udders teem,*
*And all things that are young have life anew,*
*Where my sweet maiden wanders: but parched and*
*withered seem,*
*When she departeth, lawn and shepherd too."*
DAPHNIS. *"Fat are the sheep, the goats bear twins, the*
*hives are thronged with bees,*
*Rises the oak beyond his natural growth,*
*Where falls my darling's footstep: but hungriness shall*
*seize,*

*When she departeth, herd and herdsman both."*

MENALCAS. *"Come, ram, with thy blunt-muzzled kids and sleek wives at thy side,*
*Where winds the brook by woodlands myriad-deep:*
*There is her haunt. Go, Stump-horn, tell her how Proteus plied*
*(A god) the shepherd's trade, with seals for sheep."*

DAPHNIS. *"I ask not gold, I ask not the broad lands of a king;*
*I ask not to be fleeter than the breeze;*
*But 'neath this steep to watch my sheep, feeding as one, and fling*
*(Still clasping her) my carol o'er the seas."*

MENALCAS. *"Storms are the fruit-tree's bane; the brook's, a summer hot and dry;*
*The stag's a woven net, a gin the dove's;*
*Mankind's, a soft sweet maiden. Others have pined ere I:*
*Zeus! Father! hadst not thou thy lady-loves?"*

*Thus far, in alternating strains, the lads their woes rehearst:*
*Then each one gave a closing stave. Thus sang Menalcas first:*

MENALCAS. *"O spare, good wolf, my weanlings! their milky mothers spare!*
*Harm not the little lad that hath so many in his care!*

*What, Firefly, is thy sleep so deep? It ill befits a hound,*
*Tending a boyish master's flock, to slumber over-sound.*
*And, wethers, of this tender grass take, nothing coy, your fill:*
*So, when it comes, the after-math shall find you feeding still.*
*So! so! graze on, that ye be full, that not an udder fail:*
*Part of the milk shall rear the lambs, and part shall fill my pail."*

*Then Daphnis flung a carol out, as of a nightingale:*
DAPHNIS. *"Me from her grot but yesterday a girl of haughty brow*
*Spied as I passed her with my kine, and said, 'How fair art thou!'*
*I vow that not one bitter word in answer did I say,*
*But, looking ever on the ground, went silently my way.*
*The heifer's voice, the heifer's breath, are passing sweet to me;*
*And sweet is sleep by summer-brooks upon the breezy lea:*
*As acorns are the green oak's pride, apples the apple-bough's;*
*So the cow glorieth in her calf, the cowherd in his cows."*

*Thus the two lads; then spoke the third, sitting his goats among:*

GOATHERD. *"O Daphnis, lovely is thy voice, thy music sweetly sung;*
*Such song is pleasanter to me than honey on my tongue.*
*Accept this pipe, for thou hast won. And should there be some notes*
*That thou couldst teach me, as I plod alongside with my goats,*
*I'll give thee for thy schooling this ewe, that horns hath none:*
*Day after day she'll fill the can, until the milk o'errun."*

*Then how the one lad laughed and leaped and clapped his hands for glee!*
*A kid that bounds to meet its dam might dance as merrily.*
*And how the other inly burned, struck down by his disgrace!*
*A maid first parting from her home might wear as sad a face.*

*Thenceforth was Daphnis champion of all the country side:*
*And won, while yet in topmost youth, a Naiad for his bride.*

# *IDYLL IX*

## PASTORALS

DAPHNIS MENALCAS A SHEPHERD

SHEPHERD. *A song from Daphnis! Open he the lay,*
*He open: and Menalcas follow next:*
*While the calves suck, and with the barren kine*
*The young bulls graze, or roam knee-deep in leaves,*
*And ne'er play truant. But a song from thee,*
*Daphnis—anon Menalcas will reply.*
DAPHNIS. *Sweet is the chorus of the calves and kine,*
*And sweet the herdsman's pipe. But none may vie*
*With Daphnis; and a rush-strown bed is mine*
*Near a cool rill, where carpeted I lie*
*On fair white goatskins. From a hill-top high*
*The westwind swept me down the herd entire,*
*Cropping the strawberries: whence it comes that I*
*No more heed summer, with his breath of fire,*
*Than lovers heed the words of mother and of sire.*

*Thus Daphnis: and Menalcas answered thus:*
MENALCAS. *O Ætna, mother mine! A grotto fair,*
*Scooped in the rocks, have I: and there I keep*
*All that in dreams men picture! Treasured there*

*Are multitudes of she-goats and of sheep,*
*Swathed in whose wool from top to toe I sleep.*
*The fire that boils my pot, with oak or beech*
*Is piled—dry beech-logs when the snow lies deep;*
*And storm and sunshine, I disdain them each*
*As toothless sires a nut, when broth is in their reach.*

*I clapped applause, and straight produced my gifts:*
*A staff for Daphnis—'t was the handiwork*
*Of nature, in my father's acres grown:*
*Yet might a turner find no fault therewith.*
*I gave his mate a goodly spiral-shell:*
*We stalked its inmate on the Icarian rocks*
*And ate him, parted fivefold among five.*
*He blew forthwith the trumpet on his shell.*
*Tell, woodland Muse—and then farewell—what song*
*I, the chance-comer, sang before those twain.*
SHEPHERD. *Ne'er let a falsehood scarify my tongue!*
*Crickets with crickets, ants with ants agree,*
*And hawks with hawks: and music sweetly sung,*
*Beyond all else, is grateful unto me.*
*Filled aye with music may my dwelling be!*
*Not slumber, not the bursting forth of Spring*
*So charms me, nor the flowers that tempt the bee,*
*As those sweet Sisters. He, on whom they fling*
*One gracious glance, is proof to Circè's blandishing.*

# *IDYLL X*

## THE TWO WORKMEN

MILO BATTUS

*What now, poor o'erworked drudge, is on thy mind?*
*No more in even swathe thou layest the corn:*
*Thy fellow-reapers leave thee far behind,*
*As flocks a ewe that 's footsore from a thorn.*
*By noon and midday what will be thy plight*
*If now, so soon, thy sickle fails to bite?*
BATTUS. *Hewn from hard rocks, untired at set of sun,*
*Milo, didst ne'er regret some absent one?*
MILO. *Not I. What time have workers for regret?*
BATTUS. *Hath love ne'er kept thee from thy slumbers yet?*
MILO. *Nay, heaven forbid! If once the cat taste cream!*
BATTUS. *Milo, these ten days love hath been my dream.*
MILO. *You drain your wine, while vinegar 's scarce with me.*
BATTUS. *—Hence since last spring untrimmed my borders be.*
MILO. *And what lass flouts thee?*
BATTUS. *She whom we heard play*
*Amongst Hippocoön's reapers yesterday.*

MILO. *Your sins have found you out—you're e'en served right:*
*You'll clasp a corn-crake in your arms all night.*
BATTUS. *You laugh: but headstrong Love is blind no less*
*Than Plutus: talking big is foolishness.*
MILO. *I talk not big. But lay the corn-ears low*
*And trill the while some love-song—easier so*
*Will seem your toil: you used to sing, I know.*
BATTUS. *Maids of Pieria, of my slim lass sing!*
*One touch of yours ennobles everything.*

[*Sings*] *Fairy Bombyca! thee do men report*
*Lean, dusk, a gipsy: I alone nut-brown.*
*Violets and pencilled hyacinths are swart,*
*Yet first of flowers they're chosen for a crown.*
*As goats pursue the clover, wolves the goat,*
*And cranes the ploughman, upon thee I dote.*

*Had I but Crœsus' wealth, we twain should stand*
*Gold-sculptured in Love's temple; thou, thy lyre*
*(Ay or a rose or apple) in thy hand,*
*I in my brave new shoon and dance-attire.*
*Fairy Bombyca! twinkling dice thy feet,*
*Poppies thy lips, thy ways none knows how sweet!*

MILO. *Who dreamed what subtle strains our*
*bumpkin wrought?*
*How shone the artist in each measured verse!*
*Fie on the beard that I have grown for naught!*
*Mark, lad, these lines by glorious Lytierse.*

[*Sings*] *O rich in fruit and cornblade: be this field*
*Tilled well, Demeter, and fair fruitage yield!*

*Bind the sheaves, reapers: lest one, passing, say—*
*"A fig for these, they're never worth their pay."*

*Let the mown swathes look northward, ye who mow,*
*Or westward—for the ears grow fattest so.*

*Avoid a noontide nap, ye threshing men:*
*The chaff flies thickest from the corn-ears then.*

*Wake when the lark wakes; when he slumbers, close*
*Your work, ye reapers: and at noontide doze.*

*Boys, the frogs' life for me! They need not him*
*Who fills the flagon, for in drink they swim.*

*Better boil herbs, thou toiler after gain,*
*Than, splitting cummin, split thy hand in twain.*

*Strains such as these, I trow, befit them well*
*Who toil and moil when noon is at its height:*
*Thy meagre love-tale, bumpkin, thou shouldst tell*
*Thy grandam as she wakes up ere 't is light.*

# *IDYLL XI*

## THE GIANT'S WOOING

*Methinks all nature hath no cure for Love,*
*Plaster or unguent, Nicias, saving one;*
*And this is light and pleasant to a man,*
*Yet hard withal to compass—minstrelsy.*
*As well thou wottest, being thyself a leech,*
*And a prime favourite of those Sisters nine.*
*'T was thus our Giant lived a life of ease,*
*Old Polyphemus, when, the down scarce seen*
*On lip and chin, he wooed his ocean nymph:*
*No curlypated rose-and-apple wooer,*
*But a fell madman, blind to all but love.*
*Oft from the green grass foldward fared his sheep*
*Unbid: while he upon the windy beach,*
*Singing his Galatea, sat and pined*
*From dawn to dusk, an ulcer at his heart:*
*Great Aphroditè's shaft had fixed it there.*
*Yet found he that one cure: he sate him down*
*On the tall cliff, and seaward looked, and sang:*

*"White Galatea, why disdain thy love?*
*White as a pressed cheese, delicate as the lamb,*
*Wild as the heifer, soft as summer grapes!*

*If sweet sleep chain me, here thou walk'st at large;*
*If sweet sleep loose me, straightway thou art gone,*
*Scared like a sheep that sees the gray wolf near.*
*I loved thee, maiden, when thou cam'st long since,*
*To pluck the hyacinth-blossom on the fell,*
*Thou and my mother, piloted by me.*
*I saw thee, see thee still, from that day forth*
*For ever; but 't is naught, ay naught, to thee.*
*I know, sweet maiden, why thou art so coy:*
*Shaggy and huge, a single eyebrow spans*
*From ear to ear my forehead, whence one eye*
*Gleams, and an o'erbroad nostril tops my lip.*
*Yet I, this monster, feed a thousand sheep*
*That yield me sweetest draughts at milking-tide:*
*In summer, autumn, or midwinter, still*
*Fails not my cheese; my milkpail aye o'erflows.*
*Then I can pipe as ne'er did Giant yet,*
*Singing our loves — ours, honey, thine and mine —*
*At dead of night: and hinds I rear eleven*
*(Each with her fawn) and bearcubs four, for thee.*
*Oh come to me — thou shalt not rue the day —*
*And let the mad seas beat against the shore!*
*'T were sweet to haunt my cave the livelong night:*
*Laurel, and cypress tall, and ivy dun,*
*And vines of sumptuous fruitage, all are there:*
*And a cold spring that pine-clad Ætna flings*

*Down from the white snow's midst, a draught for*
*gods!*
*Who would not change for this the ocean-waves?*

*"But thou mislik'st my hair? Well, oaken logs*
*Are here, and embers yet aglow with fire.*
*Burn (if thou wilt) my heart out, and mine eye,*
*Mine only eye wherein is my delight.*
*Oh why was I not born a finny thing,*
*To float unto thy side and kiss thy hand,*
*Denied thy lips — and bring thee lilies white*
*And crimson-petalled poppies' dainty bloom!*
*Nay — summer hath his flowers and autumn his;*
*I could not bring all these the selfsame day.*
*Lo, should some mariner hither oar his road,*
*Sweet, he shall teach me straightway how to swim,*
*That haply I may learn what bliss ye find*
*In your sea-homes. O Galatea, come*
*Forth from yon waves, and coming forth forget*
*(As I do, sitting here) to get thee home:*
*And feed my flocks and milk them, nothing loth,*
*And pour the rennet in to fix my cheese!*

*"The blame's my mother's; she is false to me;*
*Spake thee ne'er yet one sweet word for my sake,*
*Though day by day she sees me pine and pine.*

*I'll feign strange throbbings in my head and feet*
*To anguish her—as I am anguished now."*

*O Cyclops, Cyclops, where are flown thy wits?*
*Go plait rush-baskets, lop the olive-boughs*
*To feed thy lambkins—'t were the shrewder part.*
*Chase not the recreant, milk the willing ewe:*
*The world hath Galateas fairer yet.*

*"—Many a fair damsel bids me sport with her*
*The livelong night, and smiles if I give ear.*
*On land at least I still am somebody."*

*Thus did the Giant feed his love on song,*
*And gained more ease than may be bought with gold.*

# *IDYLL XII*

## THE COMRADES

*Thou art come, lad, come! Scarce thrice hath dusk to-day*
*Given place—but lovers in an hour grow gray.*
*As spring's more sweet than winter, grapes than thorns,*
*The ewe's fleece richer than her latest-born's;*
*As young girls' charms the thrice-wed wife's outshine,*
*As fawns are lither than the ungainly kine,*
*Or as the nightingale's clear notes outvie*
*The mingled music of all birds that fly;*
*So at thy coming passing glad was I.*
*I ran to greet thee e'en as pilgrims run*
*To beechen shadows from the scorching sun:*
*Oh if on us accordant Loves would breathe,*
*And our two names to future years bequeath!*

*"These twain"—let men say—"lived in olden days.*
*This was a yokel (in their country-phrase),*
*That was his mate (so talked these simple folk):*
*And lovingly they bore a mutual yoke.*
*The hearts of men were made of sterling gold,*
*When troth met troth, in those brave days of old."*

*O Zeus, O gods who age not nor decay!*
*Let e'en two hundred ages roll away,*

*But at the last these tidings let me learn,*
*Borne o'er the fatal pool whence none return:—*
*"By every tongue thy constancy is sung,*
*Thine and thy favourite's—chiefly by the young."*
*But lo, the future is in heaven's high hand:*
*Meanwhile thy graces all my praise demand,*
*Not false lip-praise, not idly bubbling froth—*
*For though thy wrath be kindled, e'en thy wrath*
*Hath no sting in it: doubly I am caressed,*
*And go my way repaid with interest.*

*Oarsmen of Megara, ruled by Nisus erst!*
*Yours be all bliss, because ye honoured first*
*That true child-lover, Attic Diocles.*
*Around his gravestone with the first spring-breeze*
*Flock the bairns all, to win the kissing-prize:*
*And whoso sweetliest lip to lip applies*
*Goes crown-clad home to its mother. Blest is he*
*Who in such strife is named the referee:*
*To brightfaced Ganymede full oft he'll cry*
*To lend his lip the potencies that lie*
*Within that stone with which the usurers*
*Detect base metal, and which never errs.*

# *IDYLL XIII*

## HYLAS

*Not for us only, Nicias, (vain the dream,)*
*Sprung from what god soe'er, was Eros born:*
*Not to us only grace doth graceful seem,*
*Frail things who wot not of the coming morn.*
*No—for Amphitryon's iron-hearted son,*
*Who braved the lion, was the slave of one:—*

*A fair curled creature, Hylas was his name.*
*He taught him, as a father might his child,*
*All songs whereby himself had risen to fame;*
*Nor ever from his side would be beguiled*
*When noon was high, nor when white steeds convey*
*Back to heaven's gates the chariot of the day,*

*Nor when the hen's shrill brood becomes aware*
*Of bed-time, as the mother's flapping wings*
*Shadow the dust-browned beam. 'T was all his care*
*To shape unto his own imaginings*
*And to the harness train his favourite youth,*
*Till he became a man in very truth.*

*Meanwhile, when kingly Jason steered in quest*
*Of the Gold Fleece, and chieftains at his side*

*Chosen from all cities, proffering each her best,*
*To rich Iolchos came that warrior tried,*
*And joined him unto trim-built Argo's crew;*
*And with Alcmena's son came Hylas too.*

*Through the great gulf shot Argo like a bird—*
*And by-and-by reached Phasis, ne'er o'erta'en*
*By those in-rushing rocks, that have not stirred*
*Since then, but bask, twin monsters, on the main.*
*But now, when waned the spring, and lambs were fed*
*In far-off fields, and Pleiads gleamed o'erhead,*

*That cream and flower of knighthood looked to sail.*
*They came, within broad Argo safely stowed,*
*(When for three days had blown the southern gale)*
*To Hellespont, and in Propontis rode*
*At anchor, where Cianian oxen now*
*Broaden the furrows with the busy plough.*

*They leapt ashore, and, keeping rank, prepared*
*Their evening meal: a grassy meadow spread*
*Before their eyes, and many a warrior shared*
*(Thanks to its verdurous stores) one lowly bed.*
*And while they cut tall marigolds from their stem*
*And sworded bulrush, Hylas slipt from them.*

*Water the fair lad went to seek and bring*
*To Heracles and stalwart Telamon,*
*(The comrades aye partook each other's fare,)*
*Bearing a brazen pitcher. And anon,*
*Where the ground dipt, a fountain he espied,*
*And rushes growing green about its side.*

*There rose the sea-blue swallow-wort, and there*
*The pale-hued maidenhair, with parsley green*
*And vagrant marsh-flowers; and a revel rare*
*In the pool's midst the water-nymphs were seen*
*To hold, those maidens of unslumbrous eyes*
*Whom the belated peasant sees and flies.*

*And fast did Malis and Eunica cling,*
*And young Nychea with her April face,*
*To the lad's hand, as stooping o'er the spring*
*He dipt his pitcher. For the young Greek's grace*
*Made their soft senses reel; and down he fell,*
*All of a sudden, into that black well.*

*So drops a red star suddenly from sky*
*To sea—and quoth some sailor to his mate:*
*"Up with the tackle, boy! the breeze is high."*
*Him the nymphs pillowed, all disconsolate,*

*On their sweet laps, and with soft words beguiled;*
*But Heracles was troubled for the child.*

*Forth went he; Scythian-wise his bow he bore*
*And the great club that never quits his side;*
*And thrice called "Hylas"—ne'er came lustier roar*
*From that deep chest. Thrice Hylas heard and tried*
*To answer, but in tones you scarce might hear;*
*The water made them distant though so near.*

*And as a lion, when he hears the bleat*
*Of fawns among the mountains far away,*
*A murderous lion, and with hurrying feet*
*Bounds from his lair to his predestined prey:*
*So plunged the strong man in the untrodden brake—*
*(Lovers are maniacs)—for his darling's sake.*

*He scoured far fields—what hill or oaken glen*
*Remembers not that pilgrimage of pain?*
*His troth to Jason was forgotten then.*
*Long time the good ship tarried for those twain*
*With hoisted sails; night came and still they cleared*
*The hatches, but no Heracles appeared.*

*On he was wandering, reckless where he trod,*
*So mad a passion on his vitals preyed:*

*While Hylas had become a blessèd god.*
*But the crew cursed the runaway who had stayed*
*Sixty good oars, and left him there to reach*
*Afoot bleak Phasis and the Colchian beach.*

# *IDYLL XIV*

## THE LOVE OF ÆSCHINES

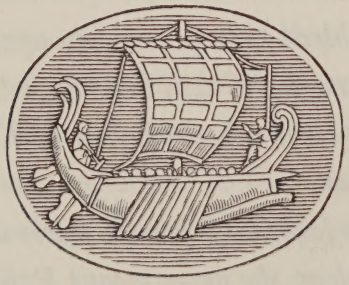
THYONICHUS ÆSCHINES

ÆSCHINES. *Hail, sir Thyonichus.*
THYONICHUS. *Æschines, to you.*
ÆSCHINES. *I have missed thee.*
THYONICHUS. *Missed me! Why what ails him now?*
ÆSCHINES. *My friend, I am ill at ease.*
THYONICHUS. *Then this explains*
*Thy leanness, and thy prodigal moustache*
*And dried-up curls. Thy counterpart I saw,*
*A wan Pythagorean, yesterday.*
*He said he came from Athens: shoes he had none:*
*He pined, I'll warrant,—for a quartern loaf.*
ÆSCHINES. *Sir, you will joke — But I've been outraged sore,*
*And by Cynisca. I shall go stark mad*
*Ere you suspect — a hair would turn the scale.*
THYONICHUS. *Such thou wert always, Æschines my friend.*
*In lazy mood or trenchant, at thy whim*
*The world must wag. But what's thy grievance now?*
ÆSCHINES. *That Argive, Apis the Thessalian Knight,*

*Myself, and gallant Cleonicus, supped*
*Within my grounds. Two pullets I had slain,*
*And a prime pig: and broached my Biblian wine;*
*'T was four years old, but fragrant as when new.*
*Truffles were served to us: and the drink was good.*
*Well, we got on, and each must drain a cup*
*To whom he fancied; only each must name.*
*We named, and took our liquor as ordained;*
*But she sate silent—this before my face.*
*Fancy my feelings! "Wilt not speak? Hast seen*
*A wolf?" some wag said. "Shrewdly guessed," quoth she,
*And blushed—her blushes might have fired a torch.*
*A wolf had charmed her: Wolf her neighbour's son,*
*Goodly and tall, and fair in divers eyes:*
*For his illustrious sake it was she pined.*
*This had been breathed, just idly, in my ear:*
*Shame on my beard, I ne'er pursued the hint.*
*Well, when we four were deep amid our cups,*
*The Knight must sing "The Wolf" (a local song)*
*Right through for mischief. All at once she wept*
*Hot tears as girls of six years old might weep,*
*Clinging and clamouring round their mother's lap.*
*And I, (you know my humour, friend of mine,)*
*Drove at his face, one, two! She gathered up*
*Her robes and vanished straightway through the door.*

*"And so I fail to please, false lady mine?*
*Another lies more welcome in thy lap?*
*Go warm that other's heart: he'll say thy tears*
*Are liquid pearls." And as a swallow flies*
*Forth in a hurry, here or there to find*
*A mouthful for her brood among the eaves:*
*From her soft sofa passing-swift she fled*
*Through folding-doors and hall, with random feet:*
*"The stag had gained his heath": you know the rest.*
*Three weeks, a month, nine days and ten to that,*
*To-day's the eleventh: and 't is just two months*
*All but two days, since she and I were two.*
*Hence is my beard of more than Thracian growth.*
*Now Wolf is all to her: Wolf enters in*
*At midnight; I am a cypher in her eyes;*
*The poor Megarian, nowhere in the race.*
*All would go right, if I could once unlove:*
*But now, you wot, the rat hath tasted tar.*
*And what may cure a swain at his wits' end*
*I know not: Simus, (true,) a mate of mine,*
*Loved Epichalcus' daughter, and took ship*
*And came home cured. I too will sail the seas.*
*Worse men, it may be better, are afloat,*
*I shall still prove an average man-at-arms.*
THYONICHUS. *Now may thy love run smoothly,*
*Æschines!*

*But should'st thou really mean a voyage out,*
*The freeman's best paymaster's Ptolemy.*
ÆSCHINES. *What is he else?*
THYONICHUS. *A gentleman: a man*
*Of wit and taste; the top of company;*
*Loyal to ladies; one whose eye is keen*
*For friends, and keener still for enemies.*
*Large in his bounties, he, in kingly sort,*
*Denies a boon to none: but, Æschines,*
*One should not ask too often. This premised,*
*If thou wilt clasp the military cloak*
*O'er thy right shoulder, and with legs astride*
*Await the onward rush of shielded men:*
*Hie thee to Egypt. Age o'ertakes us all;*
*Our temples first; then on o'er cheek and chin,*
*Slowly and surely, creep the frosts of Time.*
*Up and do somewhat, ere thy limbs are sere.*



# *IDYLL XV*

## THE FESTIVAL OF ADONIS

GORGO PRAXINOÄ

GORGO. *Praxinoä in?*
PRAXINOÄ. *Yes, Gorgo dear! At last!*
*That you're here now's a marvel! See to a chair,*
*A cushion, Eunoä!*
GORGO. *I lack naught.*
PRAXINOÄ. *Sit down.*
GORGO. *Oh, what a thing is spirit! Here I am,*
*Praxinoä, safe at last from all that crowd*
*And all those chariots—every street a mass*
*Of boots and uniforms! And the road, my dear,*
*Seemed endless—you live now so far away!*
PRAXINOÄ. *This land's-end den—I cannot call it house—*
*My madcap hired to keep us twain apart*
*And stir up strife. 'T was like him, odious pest!*
GORGO. *Nay call not, dear, your lord, your Deinon, names*
*To the babe's face. Look how it stares at you!*
*There, baby dear, she never meant Papa!*
*It understands, by 'r lady! Dear Papa!*

PRAXINOÄ. *Well, yesterday (that means what day you like)*
*"Papa" had rouge and hair-powder to buy;*
*He brought back salt! this oaf of six-foot-one!*
GORGO. *Just such another is that pickpocket*
*My Diocleides. He bought t' other day*
*Six fleeces at seven drachms, his last exploit.*
*What were they? scraps of worn-out pedlar's-bags,*
*Sheer trash. — But put your cloak and mantle on;*
*And we'll to Ptolemy's, the sumptuous king,*
*To see the Adonis. As I hear, the queen*
*Provides us something gorgeous.*
PRAXINOÄ. *Ay, the grand*
*Can do things grandly.*
GORGO. *When you've seen yourself,*
*What tales you'll have to tell to those who've not.*
*'T were time we started!*
PRAXINOÄ. *All time 's holiday*
*With idlers! Eunoä, pampered minx, the jug!*
*Set it down here — you cats would sleep all day*
*On cushions — Stir yourself, fetch water, quick!*
*Water's our first want. How she holds the jug!*
*Now, pour — not, cormorant, in that wasteful way —*
*You've drenched my dress, bad luck t' you! There, enough:*
*I have made such toilet as my fates allowed.*

*Now for the key o' the plate-chest. Bring it, quick!*
GORGO. *My dear, that full pelisse becomes you well.*
*What did it stand you in, straight off the loom?*
PRAXINOÄ. *Don't ask me, Gorgo: two good pounds and more.*
*Then I gave all my mind to trimming it.*
GORGO. *Well, 't is a great success.*
PRAXINOÄ. *I think it is.*
*My mantle, Eunoä, and my parasol!*
*Arrange me nicely. Babe, you'll bide at home!*
*Horses would bite you — Boo! — Yes, cry your fill,*
*But we won't have you maimed. Now let's be off.*
*You, Phrygia, take and nurse the tiny thing:*
*Call the dog in: make fast the outer door!*

[*Exeunt.*

*Gods! what a crowd! How, when shall we get past*
*This nuisance, these unending ant-like swarms?*
*Yet, Ptolemy, we owe thee thanks for much*
*Since heaven received thy sire! No miscreant now*
*Creeps Thug-like up, to maul the passer-by.*
*What games men played erewhile — men shaped in crime,*
*Birds of a feather, rascals every one!*
*— We're done for, Gorgo darling — here they are,*
*The Royal horse! Sweet sir, don't trample me!*
*That bay — the savage! — reared up straight on end!*

*Fly, Eunoä, can't you? Doggedly she stands.*
*He'll be his rider's death!—How glad I am*
*My babe's at home.*
GORGO. *Praxinoä, never mind!*
*See, we're before them now, and they're in line.*
PRAXINOÄ. *There, I'm myself. But from a child I feared*
*Horses, and slimy snakes. But haste we on:*
*A surging multitude is close behind.*
GORGO [*to Old Lady*]. *From the palace, mother?*
OLD LADY. *Ay, child.*
GORGO. *Is it fair*
*Of access?*
OLD LADY. *Trying brought the Greeks to Troy.*
*Young ladies, they must try who would succeed.*
GORGO. *The crone hath said her oracle and gone.*
*Women know all—how Adam married Eve.*
*—Praxinoä, look what crowds are round the door!*
PRAXINOÄ. *Fearful! Your hand, please, Gorgo.*
*Eunoä, you*
*Hold Eutychis—hold tight or you'll be lost.*
*We'll enter in a body—hold us fast!*
*Oh dear, my muslin dress is torn in two,*
*Gorgo, already! Pray, good gentleman,*
*(And happiness be yours) respect my robe!*
STRANGER. *I could not if I would—nathless I will.*

PRAXINOÄ. *They come in hundreds, and they push like swine.*

STRANGER. *Lady, take courage: it is all well now.*

PRAXINOÄ. *And now and ever be it well with thee,*
*Sweet man, for shielding us! An honest soul*
*And kindly. Oh! they're smothering Eunoä:*
*Push, coward! That's right! "All in," the bridegroom said,*
*And locked the door upon himself and bride.*

GORGO. *Praxinoä, look! Note well this broidery first.*
*How exquisitely fine—too good for earth!*
*Empress Athenè, what strange sempstress wrought*
*Such work? What painter painted, realized*
*Such pictures? Just like life they stand or move,*
*Facts and not fancies! What a thing is man!*
*How bright, how lifelike on his silvern couch*
*Lies, with youth's bloom scarce shadowing his cheek,*
*That dear Adonis, lovely e'en in death!*

A STRANGER. *Bad luck t' you, cease your senseless pigeon's prate!*
*Their brogue is killing—every word a drawl!*

GORGO. *Where did he spring from? Is our prattle aught*
*To you, Sir? Order your own slaves about:*
*You're ordering Syracusan ladies now!*
*Corinthians bred (to tell you one fact more)*
*As was Bellerophon: islanders in speech,*

*For Dorians may talk Doric, I presume?*
PRAXINOÄ. *Persephonè! none lords it over me,*
*Save one! No scullion's-wage for us from you!*
GORGO. *Hush, dear. The Argive's daughter's going to sing*
*The Adonis: that accomplished vocalist*
*Who has no rival in "The Sailor's Grave."*
*Observe her attitudinizing now.*

[*Song.*] *Queen, who lov'st Golgi and the Sicel hill*
*And Ida; Aphroditè radiant-eyed;*
*The stealthy-footed Hours from Acheron's rill*
*Brought once again Adonis to thy side*
*How changed in twelve short months! They travel slow,*
*Those precious Hours: we hail their advent still,*
*For blessings do they bring to all below.*
*O Sea-born! thou didst erst, or legend lies,*
*Shed on a woman's soul thy grace benign,*
*And Berenicè's dust immortalize.*
*O called by many names, at many a shrine!*
*For thy sweet sake doth Berenicè's child*
*(Herself a second Helen) deck with all*
*That's fair, Adonis. On his right are piled*
*Ripe apples fallen from the oak-tree tall;*
*And silver caskets at his left support*

*Toy-gardens, Syrian scents enshrined in gold*
*And alabaster, cakes of every sort*
*That in their ovens the pastrywomen mould,*
*When with white meal they mix all flowers that*
*bloom,*
*Oil-cakes and honey-cakes. There stand portrayed*
*Each bird, each butterfly; and in the gloom*
*Of foliage climbing high, and downward weighed*
*By graceful blossoms, do the young Loves play*
*Like nightingales, and perch on every tree,*
*And flit, to try their wings, from spray to spray.*
*Then see the gold, the ebony! Only see*
*The ivory-carven eagles, bearing up*
*To Zeus the boy who fills his royal cup!*
*Soft as a dream, such tapestry gleams o'erhead*
*As the Milesian's self would gaze on, charmed.*
*But sweet Adonis hath his own sweet bed:*
*Next Aphroditè sleeps the roseate-armed,*
*A bridegroom of eighteen or nineteen years.*
*Kiss the smooth boyish lip—there's no sting there!*
*The bride hath found her own: all bliss be hers!*
*And him at dewy dawn we'll troop to bear*
*Down where the breakers hiss against the shore:*
*There, with dishevelled dress and unbound hair,*
*Bare-bosomed all, our descant wild we'll pour:*

*"Thou haunt'st, Adonis, earth and heaven in turn,*
*Alone of heroes. Agamemnon ne'er*
*Could compass this, nor Aias stout and stern:*
*Not Hector, eldest-born of her who bare*
*Ten sons, not Patrocles, nor safe-returned*
*From Ilion Pyrrhus, such distinction earned:*
*Nor, elder yet, the Lapithæ, the sons*
*Of Pelops and Deucalion; or the crown*
*Of Greece, Pelasgians. Gracious may'st thou be,*
*Adonis, now: pour new-year's blessings down!*
*Right welcome dost thou come, Adonis dear:*
*Come when thou wilt, thou'lt find a welcome here."*

GORGO. *'T is fine, Praxinoä! How I envy her*
*Her learning, and still more her luscious voice!*
*We must go home: my husband's supperless:*
*And, in that state, the man's just vinegar.*
*Don't cross his path when hungry! So farewell,*
*Adonis, and be housed 'mid welfare aye!*

# *IDYLL XVI*

## THE VALUE OF SONG

*What fires the Muse's, what the minstrel's lays?*
*Hers some immortal's, ours some hero's praise,*
*Heaven is her theme, as heavenly was her birth:*
*We, of earth earthy, sing the sons of earth.*
*Yet who, of all that see the gray morn rise,*
*Lifts not his latch and hails with eager eyes*
*My Songs, yet sends them guerdonless away?*
*Barefoot and angry homeward journey they,*
*Taunt him who sent them on that idle quest,*
*Then crouch them deep within their empty chest,*
*(When wageless they return, their dismal bed)*
*And hide on their chill knees once more their patient*
*head.*
*Where are those good old times? Who thanks us, who,*
*For our good word? Men list not now to do*
*Great deeds and worthy of the minstrel's verse:*
*Vassals of gain, their hand is on their purse,*
*Their eyes on lucre: ne'er a rusty nail*
*They'll give in kindness; this being aye their tale:*
*"Kin before kith; to prosper is my prayer;*
*Poets, we know, are heaven's peculiar care.*

*We've Homer; and what other's worth a thought?*
*I call him chief of bards who costs me naught."*

*Yet what if all your chests with gold are lined?*
*Is this enjoying wealth? Oh fools and blind!*
*Part on your heart's desire, on minstrels spend*
*Part; and your kindred and your kind befriend:*
*And daily to the gods bid altar-fires ascend.*
*Nor be ye churlish hosts, but glad the heart*
*Of guests with wine, when they must needs depart:*
*And reverence most the priests of sacred song:*
*So, when hell hides you, shall your names live long;*
*Not doomed to wail on Acheron's sunless sands,*
*Like some poor hind, the inward of whose hands*
*The spade hath gnarled and knotted, born to groan,*
*Poor sire's poor offspring, hapless Penury's own!*

*Their monthly dole erewhile unnumbered thralls*
*Sought in Antiochus', in Aleuas' halls;*
*On to the Scopadæ's byres in endless line*
*The calves ran lowing with the hornèd kine;*
*And, marshalled by the good Creondæ's swains*
*Myriads of choice sheep basked on Crannon's plains.*
*Yet had their joyaunce ended, on the day*
*When their sweet spirit dispossessed its clay,*
*To hated Acheron's ample barge resigned.*

*Nameless, their stored-up luxury left behind,*
*With the lorn dead through ages had they lain,*
*Had not a minstrel bade them live again:—*
*Had not in woven words the Cëian sire*
*Holding sweet converse with his full-toned lyre*
*Made even their swift steeds for aye renowned,*
*When from the sacred lists they came home crowned.*
*Forgot were Lycia's chiefs, and Hector's hair*
*Of gold, and Cycnus femininely fair;*
*But that bards bring old battles back to mind.*
*Odysseus—he who roamed amongst mankind*
*A hundred years and more, reached utmost hell*
*Alive, and 'scaped the giant's hideous cell—*
*Had lived and died: Eumæus and his swine;*
*Philœtius, busy with his herded kine;*
*And great Laërtes' self, had passed away,*
*Were not their names preserved in Homer's lay.*
*Through song alone may man true glory taste;*
*The dead man's riches his survivors waste.*

*But count the waves, with yon gray wind-swept main*
*Borne shoreward: from a red brick wash his stain*
*In some pool's violet depths: 't will task thee yet*
*To reach the heart on baleful avarice set.*
*To such I say "Fare well": let theirs be store*

*Of wealth; but let them always crave for more:*
*Horses and mules inferior things I find*
*To the esteem and love of all mankind.*

*But to what mortal's roof may I repair,*
*I and my Muse, and find a welcome there?*
*I and my Muse: for minstrels fare but ill,*
*Reft of those maids, who know the mightiest's will.*
*The cycle of the years, it flags not yet;*
*In many a chariot many a steed shall sweat:*
*And one, to manhood grown, my lays shall claim,*
*Whose deeds shall rival great Achilles' fame,*
*Who from stout Aias might have won the prize*
*On Simois' plain, where Phrygian Ilus lies.*
*Now, in their sunset home on Libya's heel,*
*Phœnicia's sons unwonted chillness feel:*
*Now, with his targe of willow at his breast,*
*The Syracusan bears his spear in rest,*
*Amongst these Hiero arms him for the war,*
*Eager to fight as warriors fought of yore;*
*The plumes float darkling o'er his helmèd brow.*
*O Zeus, the sire most glorious; and O thou,*
*Empress Athenè; and thou, damsel fair,*
*Who with thy mother wast decreed to bear*
*Rule o'er rich Corinth, o'er that city of pride*
*Beside whose walls Anapus' waters glide:—*

*May ill winds waft across the Southern sea*
*(Of late a legion, now but two or three,)*
*Far from our isle, our foes; the doom to tell,*
*To wife and child, of those they loved so well;*
*While the old race enjoy once more the lands*
*Spoiled and insulted erst by alien hands!*

*And fair and fruitful may their cornlands be!*
*Their flocks in thousands bleat upon the lea,*
*Fat and full-fed; their kine, as home they wind,*
*The lagging traveller of his rest remind!*
*With might and main their fallows let them till:*
*Till comes the seedtime, and cicalas trill*
*(Hid from the toilers of the hot midday*
*In the thick leafage) on the topmost spray!*
*O'er shield and spear their webs let spiders spin,*
*And none so much as name the battle-din!*
*Then Hiero's lofty deeds may minstrels bear*
*Beyond the Scythian ocean-main, and where*
*Within those ample walls, with asphalt made*
*Time-proof, Semiramis her empire swayed.*
*I am but a single voice; but many a bard*
*Beside me do those heavenly maids regard:*
*May those all love to sing, 'mid earth's acclaim,*
*Of Sicel Arethuse, and Hiero's fame.*

*O Graces, royal nurselings, who hold dear*
*The Minyæ's city, once the Theban's fear:*
*Unbidden I tarry, whither bidden I fare*
*My Muse my comrade. And be ye too there,*
*Sisters divine! Were ye and song forgot,*
*What grace had earth? With you be aye my lot!*

# *IDYLL XVII*

## THE PRAISE OF PTOLEMY

*With Zeus begin, sweet sisters, end with Zeus,*
*When ye would sing the sovereign of the skies:*
*But first among mankind rank Ptolemy;*
*First, last, and midmost; being past compare.*
*Those mighty ones of old, half men half gods,*
*Wrought deeds that shine in many a subtle strain;*
*I, no unpractised minstrel, sing but him;*
*Divinest ears disdain not minstrelsy.*
*But as a woodman sees green Ida rise*
*Pine above pine, and ponders which to fell*
*First of those myriads; even so I pause*
*Where to begin the chapter of his praise:*
*For thousand and ten thousand are the gifts*
*Wherewith high heaven hath graced the kingliest king.*

*Was not he born to compass noblest ends,*
*Lagus' own son, so soon as he matured*
*Schemes such as ne'er had dawned on meaner minds?*
*Zeus doth esteem him as the blessèd gods;*
*In the sire's courts his golden mansion stands.*
*And near him Alexander sits and smiles,*
*The turbaned Persian's dread; and, fronting both,*

*Rises the stedfast adamantine seat*
*Erst fashioned for the bull-slayer Heracles.*
*Who there holds revels with his heavenly mates,*
*And sees, with joy exceeding, children rise*
*On children; for that Zeus exempts from age*
*And death their frames who sprang from Heracles:*
*And Ptolemy, like Alexander, claims*
*From him; his gallant son their common sire.*
*And when, the banquet o'er, the Strong Man wends,*
*Cloyed with rich nectar, home unto his wife,*
*This kinsman hath in charge his cherished shafts*
*And bow; and that his gnarled and knotted club;*
*And both to white-limbed Hebè's bower of bliss*
*Convoy the bearded warrior and his arms.*

*Then how among wise ladies—blest the pair*
*That reared her!—peerless Berenicè shone!*
*Dionè's sacred child, the Cyprian queen,*
*O'er that sweet bosom passed her taper hands:*
*And hence, 't is said, no man loved woman e'er*
*As Ptolemy loved her. She o'er-repaid*
*His love; so, nothing doubting, he could leave*
*His substance in his loyal children's care,*
*And rest with her, fond husband with fond wife.*
*She that loves not bears sons, but all unlike*
*Their father: for her heart was otherwhere.*

*O Aphroditè, matchless e'en in heaven*
*For beauty, thou didst love her; wouldst not let*
*Thy Berenicè cross the wailful waves:*
*But thy hand snatched her—to the blue lake bound*
*Else, and the dead's grim ferryman—and en-*
*shrined*
*With thee, to share thy honours. There she sits,*
*To mortals ever kind, and passion soft*
*Inspires, and makes the lover's burden light.*
*The dark-browed Argive, linked with Tydeus, bare*
*Diomed the slayer, famed in Calydon:*
*And deep-veiled Thetis unto Peleus gave*
*The javelineer Achilles. Thou wast born*
*Of Berenicè, Ptolemy by name*
*And by descent, a warrior's warrior child.*
*Cos from its mother's arms her babe received,*
*Its destined nursery, on its natal day:*
*'T was there Antigonè's daughter in her pangs*
*Cried to the goddess that could bid them cease:*
*Who soon was at her side, and lo! her limbs*
*Forgat their anguish, and a child was born*
*Fair, its sire's self. Cos saw, and shouted loud;*
*Handled the babe all tenderly, and spake:*

*"Wake, babe, to bliss: prize me, as Phœbus doth*
*His azure-spherèd Delos: grace the hill*

*Of Triops, and the Dorians' sister shores,*
*As king Apollo his Rhenæa's isle."*

*So spake the isle. An eagle high o'erhead*
*Poised in the clouds screamed thrice, the prophet-bird*
*Of Zeus, and sent by him. For awful kings*
*All are his care, those chiefliest on whose birth*
*He smiled: exceeding glory waits on them:*
*Theirs is the sovereignty of land and sea.*
*But if a myriad realms spread far and wide*
*O'er earth, if myriad nations till the soil*
*To which heaven's rain gives increase: yet what land*
*Is green as low-lying Egypt, when the Nile*
*Wells forth and piecemeal breaks the sodden glebe?*
*Where are like cities, peopled by like men?*
*Lo he hath seen three hundred towns arise,*
*Three thousand, yea three myriad; and o'er all*
*He rules, the prince of heroes, Ptolemy.*
*Claims half Phœnicia, and half Araby,*
*Syria and Libya, and the Æthiops murk;*
*Sways the Pamphylian and Cilician braves,*
*The Lycian and the Carian trained to war,*
*And all the isles: for never fleet like his*
*Rode upon ocean: land and sea alike*
*And sounding rivers hail king Ptolemy.*
*Many are his horsemen, many his targeteers,*

*Whose burdened breast is bright with clashing steel:*
*Light are all royal treasuries, weighed with his.*
*For wealth from all climes travels day by day*
*To his rich realm, a hive of prosperous peace.*
*No foeman's tramp scares monster-peopled Nile,*
*Waking to war her far-off villages:*
*No armèd robber from his war-ship leaps*
*To spoil the herds of Egypt. Such a prince*
*Sits throned in her broad plains, in whose right arm*
*Quivers the spear, the bright-haired Ptolemy.*
*Like a true king, he guards with might and main*
*The wealth his sires' arm won him and his own.*
*Nor strown all idly o'er his sumptuous halls*
*Lie piles that seem the work of labouring ants.*
*The holy homes of gods are rich therewith;*
*Theirs are the firstfruits, earnest aye of more.*
*And freely mighty kings thereof partake,*
*Freely great cities, freely honoured friends.*
*None entered e'er the sacred lists of song,*
*Whose lips could breathe sweet music, but he gained*
*Fair guerdon at the hand of Ptolemy.*
*And Ptolemy do music's votaries hymn*
*For his good gifts—hath man a fairer lot*
*Than to have earned much fame among mankind?*
*The Atridæ's name abides, while all the wealth*
*Won from the sack of Priam's stately home*

*A mist closed o'er it, to be seen no more.*
*Ptolemy, he only, treads a path whose dust*
*Burns with the footprints of his ancestors,*
*And overlays those footprints with his own.*
*He raised rich shrines to mother and to sire,*
*There reared their forms in ivory and gold,*
*Passing in beauty, to befriend mankind.*
*Thighs of fat oxen oftentimes he burns*
*On crimsoning altars, as the months roll on,*
*Ay he and his staunch wife. No fairer bride*
*E'er clasped her lord in royal palaces:*
*And her heart's love her brother-husband won.*
*In such blest union joined the immortal pair*
*Whom queenly Rhea bore, and heaven obeys:*
*One couch the maiden of the rainbow decks*
*With myrrh-dipt hands for Hera and for Zeus.*

*Now farewell, prince! I rank thee aye with gods:*
*And read this lesson to the afterdays,*
*Mayhap they'll prize it: 'Honour is of Zeus.'*

# *IDYLL XVIII*

## THE BRIDAL OF HELEN

*Whilom, in Lacedæmon,*
*Tript many a maiden fair*
*To gold-tressed Menelaus' halls,*
*With hyacinths in her hair:*
*Twelve to the Painted Chamber,*
*The queenliest in the land,*
*The clustered loveliness of Greece,*
*Came dancing hand in hand.*
*For Helen, Tyndarus' daughter,*
*Had just been wooed and won,*
*Helen the darling of the world,*
*By Atreus' younger son:*
*With woven steps they beat the floor*
*In unison, and sang*
*Their bridal-hymn of triumph*
*Till all the palace rang.*

*"Slumberest so soon, sweet bridegroom?*
*Art thou o'erfond of sleep?*
*Or hast thou leadenweighted limbs?*
*Or hadst thou drunk too deep*
*When thou didst fling thee to thy lair?*
*Betimes thou should'st have sped,*

*If sleep were all thy purpose,*
*Unto thy bachelor's bed:*
*And left her in her mother's arms*
*To nestle, and to play*
*A girl among her girlish mates*
*Till deep into the day:—*
*For not alone for this night,*
*Nor for the next alone,*
*But through the days and through the years*
*Thou hast her for thine own.*

*"Nay! heaven, O happy bridegroom,*
*Smiled as thou enteredst in*
*To Sparta, like thy brother kings,*
*And told thee thou should'st win!*
*What hero son-in-law of Zeus*
*Hath e'er aspired to be?*
*Yet lo! one coverlet enfolds*
*The child of Zeus, and thee.*
*Ne'er did a thing so lovely*
*Roam the Achaian lea.*

*"And who shall match her offspring,*
*If babes are like their mother?*
*For we were playmates once, and ran*
*And raced with one another*

*(All varnished, warrior fashion)*
*Along Eurotas' tide,*
*Thrice eighty gentle maidens,*
*Each in her girlhood's pride:*
*Yet none of all seemed faultless,*
*If placed by Helen's side.*

*"As peers the nascent Morning*
*Over thy shades, O Night,*
*When Winter disenchains the land,*
*And Spring goes forth in white:*
*So Helen shone above us,*
*All loveliness and light.*

*"As climbs aloft some cypress,*
*Garden or glade to grace;*
*As the Thessalian courser lends*
*A lustre to the race:*
*So bright o'er Lacedæmon*
*Shone Helen's rosebud face.*

*"And who into the basket e'er*
*The yarn so deftly drew,*
*Or through the mazes of the web*
*So well the shuttle threw,*
*And severed from the framework*
*As closely wov'n a warp:—*

*And who could wake with masterhand*
*Such music from the harp,*
*To broad-limbed Pallas tuning*
*And Artemis her lay—*
*As Helen, Helen in whose eyes*
*The Loves forever play?*

*"O bright, O beautiful, for thee*
*Are matron-cares begun.*
*We to green paths and blossomed meads*
*With dawn of morn must run,*
*And cull a breathing chaplet;*
*And still our dream shall be,*
*Helen, of thee, as weanling lambs*
*Yearn in the pasture for the dams*
*That nursed their infancy.*

*"For thee the lowly lotus-bed*
*We'll spoil, and plait a crown*
*To hang upon the shadowy plane;*
*For thee will we drop down*
*('Neath that same shadowy platan)*
*Oil from our silver urn;*
*And carven on the bark shall be*
*This sentence,* 'HALLOW HELEN'S TREE';
*In Dorian letters, legibly*
*For all men to discern.*

*"Now farewell, bride, and bridegroom*
*Blest in thy new-found sire!*
*May Leto, mother of the brave,*
*Bring babes at your desire,*
*And holy Cypris either's breast*
*With mutual transport fire:*
*And Zeus the son of Cronos*
*Grant blessings without end,*
*From princely sire to princely son*
*For ever to descend.*

*"Sleep on, and love and longing*
*Breathe in each other's breast;*
*But fail not when the morn returns*
*To rouse you from your rest:*
*With dawn shall we be stirring,*
*When, lifting high his fair*
*And feathered neck, the earliest bird*
*To clarion to the dawn is heard.*
*O god of brides and bridals,*
*Sing 'Happy, happy pair!'"*

# *IDYLL XIX*

## LOVE STEALING HONEY

*Once thievish Love the honeyed hives would rob,*
*When a bee stung him: soon he felt a throb*
*Through all his finger-tips, and, wild with pain,*
*Blew on his hands and stamped and jumped in vain.*
*To Aphroditè then he told his woe:*
*"How can a thing so tiny hurt one so?"*
*She smiled and said: "Why, thou 'rt a tiny thing,*
*As is the bee; yet sorely thou canst sting."*

# *IDYLL XX*

## TOWN AND COUNTRY

*Once I would kiss Eunicè. "Back," quoth she,*
*And screamed and stormed; "a sorry clown kiss me?*
*Your country compliments, I like not such;*
*No lips but gentles' would I deign to touch.*
*Ne'er dream of kissing me: alike I shun*
*Your face, your language, and your tigerish fun.*
*How winning are your tones, how fine your air!*
*Your beard how silken and how sweet your hair!*
*Pah! you've a sick man's lips, a blackamoor's hand:*
*Your breath's defilement. Leave me, I command."*

*Thrice spat she on her robe, and, muttering low,*
*Scanned me, with half-shut eyes, from top to toe:*
*Brought all her woman's witcheries into play,*
*Still smiling in a set sarcastic way,*
*Till my blood boiled, my visage crimson grew*
*With indignation, as a rose with dew:*
*And so she left me, inly to repine*
*That such as she could flout such charms as mine.*

*O sheperds, tell me true! Am I not fair?*
*Am I transformed? For lately I did wear*

*Grace as a garment; and my cheeks, o'er them*
*Ran the rich growth like ivy round the stem.*
*Like fern my tresses o'er my temples streamed;*
*O'er my dark eyebrows, white my forehead gleamed:*
*My eyes were of Athenè's radiant blue,*
*My mouth was milk, its accents honeydew.*
*Then I could sing—my tones were soft indeed!—*
*To pipe or flute or flageolet or reed:*
*And me did every maid that roams the fell*
*Kiss and call fair: not so this city belle.*
*She scorns the herdsman; knows not how divine*
*Bacchus ranged once the valleys with his kine;*
*How Cypris, maddened for a herdsman's sake,*
*Deigned upon Phrygia's mountains to partake*
*His cares: and wooed, and wept, Adonis in the brake.*
*What was Endymion, sweet Selenè's love?*
*A herdsman's lad. Yet came she from above,*
*Down to green Latmos, by his side to sleep.*
*And did not Rhea for a herdsman weep?*
*Didst not thou, Zeus, become a wandering bird,*
*To win the love of one who drove a herd?*
*Selenè, Cybelè, Cypris, all loved swains:*
*Eunicè, loftier-bred, their kiss disdains.*
*Henceforth, by hill or hall, thy love disown,*
*Cypris, and sleep the livelong night alone.*

# *IDYLL XXI*

## THE FISHERMEN

ASPHALION A COMRADE

*Want quickens wit: Want's pupils needs must work,*
*O Diophantus: for the child of toil*
*Is grudged his very sleep by carking cares:*
*Or, if he taste the blessedness of night,*
*Thought for the morrow soon warns slumber off.*

*Two ancient fishers once lay side by side*
*On piled-up sea-wrack in their wattled hut,*
*Its leafy wall their curtain. Near them lay*
*The weapons of their trade, basket and rod,*
*Hooks, weed-encumbered nets, and cords and oars,*
*And, propped on rollers, an infirm old boat.*
*Their pillow was a scanty mat, eked out*
*With caps and garments: such the ways and means,*
*Such the whole treasury of the fishermen.*
*They knew no luxuries: owned nor door nor dog;*
*Their craft their all, their mistress Poverty:*
*Their only neighbour Ocean, who for aye*
*Round their lorn hut came floating lazily.*

*Ere the moon's chariot was in mid-career,*
*The fishers girt them for their customed toil,*
*And banished slumber from unwilling eyes,*
*And roused their dreamy intellects with speech:*

ASPHALION. *"They say that soon flit summer-nights away,*
*Because all lingering is the summer day:*
*Friend, it is false; for dream on dream have I*
*Dreamed, and the dawn still reddens not the sky.*
*How? am I wandering? or does night pass slow?"*
HIS COMRADE. *"Asphalion, scout not the sweet summer so.*
*'T is not that wilful seasons have gone wrong,*
*But care maims slumber, and the nights seem long."*
ASPHALION. *"Didst thou e'er study dreams? For visions fair*
*I saw last night; and fairly thou should'st share*
*The wealth I dream of, as the fish I catch.*
*Now, for sheer sense, I reckon few thy match;*
*And, for a vision, he whose motherwit*
*Is his sole tutor best interprets it.*
*And now we've time the matter to discuss:*
*For who could labour, lying here (like us)*
*Pillowed on leaves and neighboured by the deep,*
*Or sleeping amid thorns no easy sleep?*

*In rich men's halls the lamps are burning yet;*
*But fish come alway to the rich man's net."*
COMRADE. *"To me the vision of the night relate;*
*Speak, and reveal the riddle to thy mate."*
ASPHALION. *"Last evening, as I plied my watery trade,*
*(Not on an o'erfull stomach—we had made*
*Betimes a meagre meal, as you can vouch,)*
*I fell asleep; and lo! I seemed to crouch*
*Among the boulders, and for fish to wait,*
*Still dangling, rod in hand, my vagrant bait.*
*A fat fellow caught it: (e'en in sleep I'm bound*
*To dream of fishing, as of crusts the hound:)*
*Fast clung he to the hooks; his blood outwelled;*
*Bent with his struggling was the rod I held:*
*I tugged and tugged: my efforts made me ache:*
*'How, with a line thus slight, this monster take?'*
*Then gently, just to warn him he was caught,*
*I twitched him once; then slacked and then made taut*
*My line, for now he offered not to run;*
*A glance soon showed me all my task was done.*
*'T was a gold fish, pure metal every inch*
*That I had captured. I began to flinch:*
*'What if this beauty be the sea-king's joy,*
*Or azure Amphitritè's treasured toy!'*
*With care I disengaged him—not to rip*

*With hasty hook the gilding from his lip:*
*And with a tow-line landed him, and swore*
*Never to set my foot on ocean more,*
*But with my gold live royally ashore.*
*So I awoke: and, comrade, lend me now*
*Thy wits, for I am troubled for my vow.*"
COMRADE. "*Ne'er quake: you are pledged to nothing,*
*for no prize*
*You gained or gazed on. Dreams are naught but lies.*
*Yet may this dream bear fruit; if, wide-awake*
*And not in dreams, you'll fish the neighbouring lake.*
*Fish that are meat you'll there mayhap behold,*
*Not die of famine, amid dreams of gold.*"

# *IDYLL XXII*

## THE SONS OF LEDA

*The pair I sing, that Ægis-armèd Zeus*
*Gave unto Leda; Castor and the dread*
*Of bruisers Polydeuces, whensoe'er*
*His harnessed hands were lifted for the fray.*
*Twice and again I sing the manly sons*
*Of Leda, those Twin Brethren, Sparta's own:*
*Who shield the soldier on the deadly scarp,*
*The horse wild-plunging o'er the crimson field,*
*The ship that, disregarding in her pride*
*Star-set and star-rise, meets disastrous gales:—*
*Such gales as pile the billows mountain-high,*
*E'en at their own wild will, round stem or stern:*
*Dash o'er the hold, the timbers rive in twain,*
*Till mast and tackle dangle in mid-air*
*Shivered like toys, and, as the night wears on,*
*The rain of heaven falls fast, and, lashed by wind*
*And iron hail, broad ocean rings again.*
*Then can they draw from out the nether abyss*
*Both craft and crew, each deeming he must die:*
*Lo the winds cease, and o'er the burnished deep*
*Comes stillness; this way flee the clouds and that;*
*And shine out clear the Great Bear and the Less,*

*And, 'twixt the Asses dimly seen, the Crib*
*Foretells fair voyage to the mariner.*
*O saviours, O companions of mankind,*
*Matchless on horse or harp, in lists or lay;*
*Which of ye twain demands my earliest song?*
*Of both I sing; of Polydeuces first.*

*Argo, escaped the two inrushing rocks,*
*And snow-clad Pontus with his baleful jaws,*
*Came to Bebrycia with her heaven-sprung freight;*
*There by one ladder disembarked a host*
*Of Heroes from the decks of Jason's ship.*
*On the low beach, to leeward of the cliff,*
*They leapt, and piled their beds, and lit their fires:*
*Castor meanwhile, the bridler of the steed,*
*And Polydeuces of the nut-brown face,*
*Had wandered from their mates; and, wildered both,*
*Searched through the boskage of the hill, and found*
*Hard by a slab of rock a bubbling spring*
*Brimful of purest water. In the depths*
*Below, like crystal or like silver gleamed*
*The pebbles: high above it pine and plane*
*And poplar rose, and cypress tipt with green;*
*With all rich flowers that throng the mead, when wanes*
*The Spring, sweet workshops of the furry bee.*
*There sat and sunned him one of giant bulk*

*And grisly mien: hard knocks had stov'n his ears:*
*Broad were his shoulders, vast his orbèd chest:*
*Like a wrought statue rose his iron frame:*
*And nigh the shoulder on each brawny arm*
*Stood out the muscles, huge as rolling stones*
*Caught by some rain-swoln river and shapen smooth*
*By its wild eddyings: and o'er nape and spine*
*Hung, balanced by the claws, a lion's skin.*
*Him Leda's conquering son accosted first:*

POLYDEUCES. *Luck to thee, friend unknown! Who own this shore?*

AMYCUS. *Luck, quotha, to see men ne'er seen before!*

POLYDEUCES. *Fear not, no base or base-born herd are we.*

AMYCUS. *Nothing I fear, nor need learn this from thee.*

POLYDEUCES. *What art thou? brutish churl, or o'erproud king?*

AMYCUS. *E'en what thou see'st: and I am not trespassing.*

POLYDEUCES. *Visit our land, take gifts from us, and go.*

AMYCUS. *I seek naught from thee and can naught bestow.*

POLYDEUCES. *Not e'en such grace as from yon spring to sip?*

AMYCUS. *Try, if parch'd thirst sits languid on thy lip.*
POLYDEUCES. *Can silver move thee? or if not, what can?*
AMYCUS. *Stand up and fight me singly, man with man.*
POLYDEUCES. *With fists? or fist and foot, eye covering eye?*
AMYCUS. *Fall to with fists; and all thy cunning try.*
POLYDEUCES. *This arm, these gauntlets, who shall dare withstand?*
AMYCUS. *I: and "the Bruiser" lifts no woman's-hand.*
POLYDEUCES. *Wilt thou, to crown our strife, some meed assign?*
AMYCUS. *Thou shalt be called my master, or I thine.*
POLYDEUCES. *By crimson-crested cocks such games are won.*
AMYCUS. *Lions or cocks, we'll play this game or none.*

*He spoke, and clutched a hollow shell, and blew*
*His clarion. Straightway to the shadowy pine*
*Clustering they came, as loud it pealed and long,*
*Bebrycia's bearded sons; and Castor too,*
*The peerless in the lists, went forth and called*
*From the Magnesian ship the Heroes all.*

*Then either warrior armed with coils of hide*
*His hands, and round his limbs bound ponderous bands,*

*And, breathing bloodshed, stept into the ring.*
*First there was much manœuvring, who should catch*
*The sunlight on his rear: but thou didst foil,*
*O Polydeuces, valour by address;*
*And full on Amycus' face the hot noon smote.*
*He in hot wrath strode forward, threatening war;*
*Straightway the Tyndarid smote him, as he closed,*
*Full on the chin: more furious waxed he still,*
*And, earthward bent, dealt blindly random blows.*
*Bebrycia shouted loud, the Greeks too cheered*
*Their champion: fearing lest in that scant space*
*This Tityus by sheer weight should bear him down.*
*But, shifting yet still there, the son of Zeus*
*Scored him with swift exchange of left and right,*
*And checked the onrush of the sea-god's child,*
*Parlous albeit: till, reeling with his wounds,*
*He stood, and from his lips spat crimson blood.*
*Cheered yet again the princes, when they saw*
*The lips and jowl all seamed with piteous scars,*
*And the swoln visage and the half-closed eyes.*
*Still the prince teased him, feinting here or there*
*A thrust; and when he saw him helpless all,*
*Let drive beneath his eyelids at his nose,*
*And laid it bare to the bone. The stricken man*
*Measured his length supine amid the fern.*
*Keen was the fighting when he rose again,*

*Deadly the blows their sturdy gauntlets dealt.*
*But while Bebrycia's chieftain sparred round chest*
*And utmost shoulder, the resistless foe*
*Made his whole face one mass of hideous wounds.*
*While the one sweated all his bulk away,*
*And, late a giant, seemed a pigmy now,*
*The other's limbs waxed ever as he fought*
*In semblance and in size. But in what wise*
*The child of Zeus brought low that man of greed,*
*Tell, Muse, for thine is knowledge: I unfold*
*A secret not mine own: at thy behest*
*Speak or am dumb, nor speak but as thou wilt.*

*Amycus, athirst to do some doughty deed,*
*Stooping aslant from Polydeuces' lunge*
*Locked their left hands; and, stepping out, upheaved*
*From his right hip his ponderous other-arm.*
*And hit and harmed had been Amyclæ's king;*
*But, ducking low, he smote with one stout fist*
*The foe's left temple—fast the life-blood streamed*
*From the grim rift—and on his shoulder fell.*
*While with his left he reached the mouth, and made*
*The set teeth tingle; and, redoubling aye*
*His plashing blows, made havoc of his face*
*And crashed into his cheeks, till all abroad*
*He lay, and throwing up his arms disclaimed*

*The strife, for he was even at death's door.*
*No wrong the vanquished suffered at thy hands,*
*O Polydeuces; but he sware an oath,*
*Calling his sire Poseidon from the depths,*
*Ne'er to do violence to a stranger more.*

*Thy tale, O prince, is told. Now sing I thee,*
*Castor the Tyndarid, lord of rushing horse*
*And shaking javelin, corsleted in brass.*

PART II

*The sons of Zeus had borne two maids away,*
*Leucippus' daughters. Straight in hot pursuit*
*Went the two brethren, sons of Aphareus,*
*Lynceus and Idas bold, their plighted lords.*
*And when the tomb of Aphareus was gained,*
*All leapt from out their cars, and front to front*
*Stood, with their ponderous spears and orbèd shields.*
*First Lynceus shouted loud from 'neath his helm:*

*"Whence, sirs, this lust for strife? Why, sword in hand,*
*Raise ye this coil about your neighbours' wives?*
*To us Leucippus these his daughters gave,*
*Long ere ye saw them: they are ours on oath.*

*Ye, coveting (to your shame) your neighbour's bed*
*And kine and asses and whate'er is his,*
*Suborned the man and stole our wives by bribes.*
*How often spake I thus before your face,*
*Yea I myself, though scant I am of phrase:*
*'Not thus, fair sirs, do honourable men*
*Seek to woo wives whose troth is given elsewhere.*
*Lo, broad is Sparta, broad the hunting-grounds*
*Of Elis: fleecy Arcady is broad,*
*And Argos and Messenè and the towns*
*To westward, and the long Sisyphian reach.*
*There 'neath her parents' roof dwells many a maid*
*Second to none in godliness or wit:*
*Wed of all these, and welcome, whom ye will,*
*For all men court the kinship of the brave;*
*And ye are as your sires, and they whose blood*
*Runs in your mother's veins, the flower of war.*
*Nay, sirs, but let us bring this thing to pass;*
*Then, taking counsel, choose meet brides for you.'*
*So I ran on; but o'er the shifting seas*
*The wind's breath blew my words, that found no grace*
*With you, for ye defied the charmer's voice.*
*Yet listen to me now if ne'er before:*
*Lo! we are kinsmen by the father's side.*
*But if ye lust for war, if strife must break*
*Forth among kin, and bloodshed quench our feud,*

*Bold Polydeuces then shall hold his hands*
*And his cousin Idas from the abhorrèd fray:*
*While I and Castor, the two younger-born,*
*Try war's arbitrament; so spare our sires*
*Sorrow exceeding. In one house one dead*
*Sufficeth: let the others glad their mates,*
*To the bride-chamber passing, not the grave,*
*And o'er yon maids sing jubilee. Well it were*
*At cost so small to lay so huge a strife."*

*He spoke—his words heaven gave not to the winds.*
*They, the two first-born, disarrayed and piled*
*Their arms, while Lynceus stept into the ring,*
*And at his shield's rim shook his stalwart spear.*
*And Castor likewise poised his quivering lance;*
*High waved the plume on either warrior's helm.*
*First each at other thrust with busy spear*
*Where'er he spied an inch of flesh exposed:*
*But lo! both spearpoints in their wicker shields*
*Lodged ere a blow was struck, and snapt in twain.*
*Then they unsheathed their swords, and framed new modes*
*Of slaughter: pause or respite there was none.*
*Oft Castor on broad shield and plumèd helm*
*Lit, and oft keen-eyed Lynceus pierced his shield,*
*Or grazed his crest of crimson. But anon,*

*As Lynceus aimed his blade at Castor's knee,*
*Back with the left sprang Castor and struck off*
*His fingers: from the maimed limb dropped the sword.*
*And, flying straightway, for his father's tomb*
*He made, where gallant Idas sat and saw*
*The battle of the brethren. But the child*
*Of Zeus rushed in, and with his broadsword drave*
*Through flank and navel, sundering with swift stroke*
*His vitals: Lynceus tottered and he fell,*
*And o'er his eyelids rushed the dreamless sleep.*
*Nor did their mother see her elder son*
*Come a fair bridegroom to his Cretan home.*
*For Idas wrenched from off the dead man's tomb*
*A jutting slab, to hurl it at the man*
*Who had slain his brother. Then did Zeus bring aid,*
*And struck the marble fabric from his grasp,*
*And with red lightning burned his frame to dust.*
*So doth he fight with odds who dares provoke*
*The Tyndarids, mighty sons of mighty sire.*
*Now farewell, Leda's children: prosper aye*
*The songs I sing. What minstrel loves not well*
*The Tyndarids, and Helen, and the chiefs*
*That trod Troy down for Meneläus' sake?*
*The bard of Chios wrought your royal deeds*
*Into his lays, who sang of Priam's state,*
*And fights 'neath Ilion's walls; of sailor Greeks,*

*And of Achilles towering in the strife.*
*Yet take from me whate'er of clear sweet song*
*The Muse accords me, even all my store!*
*The gods' most precious gift is minstrelsy.*

# *IDYLL XXIII*

## LOVE AVENGED

*A lad deep-dipt in passion pined for one*
*Whose mood was froward as her face was fair.*
*Lovers she loathed, for tenderness she had none:*
*Ne'er knew what Love was like, nor how he bare*
*A bow, and arrows to make young maids smart:*
*Proof to all speech, all access, seemed her heart.*

*So he found naught his furnace to allay;*
*No quiver of lips, no lighting of kind eyes,*
*Nor rose-flushed cheek; no talk, no lover's play*
*Was deigned him: but as forest-beasts are shy*
*Of hound and hunter, with this wight dealt she;*
*Fierce was her lip, her eyes gleamed ominously.*

*Her tyrant's-heart was imaged in her face,*
*That flushed, then altering put on blank disdain.*
*Yet, even then, her anger had its grace,*
*And made her lover fall in love again.*
*At last, unable to endure his flame,*
*To the fell threshold all in tears he came:*

*Kissed it, and lifted up his voice and said:*
*"O heart of stone, O curst and cruel maid*

*Unworthy of all love, by lions bred,*
*See, my last offering at thy feet is laid,*
*The halter that shall hang me! So no more*
*For my sake, lady, need thy heart be sore.*

*"Whither thou doom'st me, thither must I fare.*
*There is a path, that whoso treads hath ease*
*(Men say) from love; Forgetfulness is there.*
*But if I drain that chalice to the lees,*
*I may not quench the love I have for you;*
*Now at your gates I cast my long adieu.*

*"Your future I foresee. The rose is gay,*
*And passing-sweet the violet of the spring:*
*Yet time despoils them, and they soon decay.*
*The lily droops and dies, that lustrous thing;*
*The solid-seeming snowdrift melts full fast;*
*And maiden's bloom is rare, but may not last.*

*"The time shall come, when you shall feel as I;*
*And, with seared heart, weep many a bitter tear.*
*But, maiden, grant one farewell courtesy.*
*When you come forth, and see me hanging here,*
*E'en at your door, forget not my hard case;*
*But pause and weep me for a moment's space.*

*"And drop one tear, and cut me down, and spread*
*O'er me some garment, for a funeral pall,*
*That wrapped thy limbs: and kiss me—let the dead*
*Be privileged thus highly—last of all.*
*You need not fear me: not if your disdain*
*Changed into fondness could I live again.*

*"And scoop a grave, to hide my loves and me:*
*And thrice, at parting, say, 'My friend's no more:'*
*Add if you list, 'a faithful friend was he;'*
*And write this epitaph, scratched upon your door:*
*Stranger, Love slew him. Pass not by, until*
*Thou hast paused and said, 'His mistress used him*
*ill.'"*

*This said, he grasped a stone: that ghastly stone*
*At the mid threshold 'neath the wall he laid,*
*And o'er the beam the light cord soon was thrown,*
*And his neck noosed. In air the body swayed,*
*Its footstool spurned away. Forth came once more*
*The maid, and saw him hanging at her door.*

*No struggle of heart it cost her, ne'er a tear*
*She wept o'er that young life, nor shunned to soil,*
*By contact with the corpse, her woman's-gear.*
*But on she went to watch the athletes' toil,*

*Then made for her loved haunt, the riverside:*
*And there she met the god she had defied.*

*For on a marble pedestal Eros stood*
*Fronting the pool: the statue leaped, and smote*
*And slew that miscreant. All the stream ran blood;*
*And to the top a girl's cry seemed to float.*
*Rejoice, O lovers, since the scorner fell;*
*And, maids, be kind; for Love deals justice well.*

# *IDYLL XXIV*

## THE INFANT HERACLES

*Alcmena once had washed and given the breast*
*To Heracles, a babe of ten months old,*
*And Iphicles his junior by a night;*
*And cradled both within a brazen shield,*
*A gorgeous trophy, which Amphitryon erst*
*Had stript from Pterelăus fall'n in fight.*
*She stroked their baby brows, and thus she said:*

*"Sleep, children mine, a light luxurious sleep,*
*Brother with brother: sleep, my boys, my life:*
*Blest in your slumber, in your waking blest!"*

*She spake and rocked the shield; and in his arms*
*Sleep took them. But at midnight, when the Bear*
*Wheels to his setting, in Orion's front*
*Whose shoulder then beams broadest; Hera sent,*
*Mistress of wiles, two huge and hideous things,*
*Snakes with their scales of azure all on end,*
*To the broad portal of the chamber-door,*
*All to devour the infant Heracles.*
*They, all their length uncoiled upon the floor,*
*Writhed on to their blood-feast; a baleful light*

*Gleamed in their eyes, rank venom they spat forth.*
*But when with lambent tongues they neared the cot,*
*Alcmena's babes (for Zeus was watching all)*
*Woke, and throughout the chamber there was light.*
*Then Iphicles—so soon as he descried*
*The fell brutes peering o'er the hollow shield,*
*And saw their merciless fangs—cried lustily,*
*And kicked away his coverlet of down,*
*Fain to escape. But Heracles, he clung*
*Round them with warlike hands, in iron grasp*
*Prisoning the two: his clutch upon their throat,*
*The deadly snake's laboratory, where*
*He brews such poisons as e'en heaven abhors.*
*They twined and twisted round the babe that, born*
*After long travail, ne'er had shed a tear*
*E'en in his nursery; soon to quit their hold,*
*For powerless seemed their spines. Alcmena heard,*
*While her lord slept, the crying, and awoke.*

*"Amphitryon, up: chill fears take hold on me.*
*Up: stay not to put sandals on thy feet.*
*Hear'st thou our child, our younger, how he cries?*
*Seest thou yon walls illumed at dead of night,*
*But not by morn's pure beam? I know, I know,*
*Sweet lord, that some strange thing is happening*
*here."*

*She spake; and he, upleaping at her call,*
*Made swiftly for the sword of quaint device*
*That aye hung dangling o'er his cedarn couch:*
*And he was reaching at his span-new belt,*
*The scabbard (one huge piece of lotus-wood)*
*Poised on his arm; when suddenly the night*
*Spread out her hands, and all was dark again.*
*Then cried he to his slaves, whose sleep was deep:*
*"Quick, slaves of mine; fetch fire from yonder hearth:*
*And force with all your strength the doorbolts back!*
*Up, loyal-hearted slaves: the master calls."*

*Forth came at once the slaves with lighted lamps.*
*The house was all astir with hurrying feet.*
*But when they saw the suckling Heracles*
*With the two brutes grasped firm in his soft hands,*
*They shouted with one voice. But he must show*
*The reptiles to Amphitryon; held aloft*
*His hands in childish glee, and laughed and laid*
*At his sire's feet the monsters still in death.*

*Then did Alcmena to her bosom take*
*The terror-blanched and passionate Iphicles:*
*Cradling the other in a lambswool quilt,*
*Her lord once more bethought him of his rest.*

*Now cocks had thrice sung out that night was o'er.*
*Then went Alcmena forth and told the thing*
*To Teiresias the seer, whose words were truth,*
*And bade him rede her what the end should be:—*
*"And if the gods bode mischief, hide it not,*
*Pitying, from me: man shall not thus avoid*
*The doom that Fate upon her distaff spins.*
*Son of Eueres, thou hast ears to hear."*

*Thus spake the queen, and thus he made reply:*
*"Mother of monarchs, Perseus' child, take heart;*
*And look but on the fairer side of things.*
*For by the precious light that long ago*
*Left tenantless these eyes, I swear that oft*
*Achaia's maidens, as when eve is high*
*They mould the silken yarn upon their lap,*
*Shall tell Alcmena's story: blest art thou*
*Of women. Such a man in this thy son*
*Shall one day scale the star-encumbered heaven:*
*His amplitude of chest bespeaks him lord*
*Of all the forest beasts and all mankind.*
*Twelve tasks accomplished he must dwell with Zeus;*
*His flesh given over to Trachinian fires;*
*And son-in-law be hailed of those same gods*
*Who sent yon skulking brutes to slay thy babe.*
*Lo! the day cometh when the fawn shall couch*

*In the wolf's lair, nor fear the spiky teeth*
*That would not harm him. But, O lady, keep*
*Yon smouldering fire alive; prepare you piles*
*Of fuel, bramble-sprays or fern or furze*
*Or pear-boughs dried with swinging in the wind:*
*And let the kindled wild-wood burn those snakes*
*At midnight, when they looked to slay thy babe.*
*And let at dawn some handmaid gather up*
*The ashes of the fire, and diligently*
*Convey and cast each remnant o'er the stream*
*Faced by clov'n rocks, our boundary: then return*
*Nor look behind. And purify your home*
*First with sheer sulphur, rain upon it then,*
*(Chaplets of olive wound about your heads,)*
*Innocuous water, and the customed salt.*
*Lastly, to Zeus almighty slay a boar:*
*So shall ye vanquish all your enemies."*

*Spake Teiresias, and wheeling (though his years*
*Weighed on him sorely) gained his ivory car.*
*And Heracles as some young orchard-tree*
*Grew up, Amphitryon his reputed sire.*
*Old Linus taught him letters, Phœbus' child,*
*A dauntless toiler by the midnight lamp.*
*Each fall whereby the sons of Argos fell,*
*The flingers by cross-buttock, each his man*

*By feats of wrestling: all that boxers e'er,*
*Grim in their gauntlets, have devised, or they*
*Who wage mixed warfare and, adepts in art,*
*Upon the foe fall headlong: all such lore*
*Phocian Harpalicus gave him, Hermes' son:*
*Whom no man might behold while yet far off*
*And wait his armèd onset undismayed:*
*A brow so truculent roofed so stern a face.*
*To launch, and steer in safety round the goal,*
*Chariot and steed, and damage ne'er a wheel,*
*This the lad learned of fond Amphitryon's self.*
*Many a fair prize from listed warriors he*
*Had won on Argive racegrounds; yet the car*
*Whereon he sat came still unshattered home,*
*What gaps were in his harness time had made.*
*Then with couched lance to reach the foe, his targe*
*Covering his rear, and bide the biting sword;*
*Or, on the warpath, place his ambuscade,*
*Marshal his lines and rally his cavaliers;*
*This knightly Castor learned him, erst exiled*
*From Argos, when her realms with all their wealth*
*Of vineyards fell to Tydeus, who received*
*Her and her chariots at Adrastus' hand.*
*Amongst the Heroes none was Castor's match*
*Till age had dimmed the glory of his youth.*

*Such tutors this fond mother gave her son.*
*The stripling's bed was at his father's side,*
*One after his own heart, a lion's skin.*
*His dinner, roast meat, with a loaf that filled*
*A Dorian basket, you might soothly say*
*Had satisfied a delver; and to close*
*The day he took, sans fire, a scanty meal.*
*A simple frock went halfway down his leg:*

* * * * * * *

# *IDYLL XXV*

## HERACLES THE LION SLAYER

* * * * * *

*To whom thus spake the herdsman of the herd,*
*Pausing a moment from his handiwork:*
*"Friend, I will solve thy questions, for I fear*
*The angry looks of Hermes of the roads.*
*No dweller in the skies is wroth as he,*
*With him who saith the asking traveller nay.*

*"The flocks Augéas owns, our gracious lord,*
*One pasture pastures not, nor one fence bounds.*
*They wander, look you, some by Elissus' banks*
*Or god-beloved Alphéus' sacred stream,*
*Some by Buprasion, where the grape abounds,*
*Some here: their folds stand separate. But before*
*His herds, though they be myriad, yonder glades*
*That belt the broad lake round lie fresh and fair*
*For ever: for the low-lying meadows take*
*The dew, and teem with herbage honeysweet,*
*To lend new vigour to the hornèd kine.*
*Here on thy right their stalls thou canst descry*
*By the flowing river, for all eyes to see:*

*Here, where the platans blossom all the year,*
*And glimmers green the olive that enshrines*
*Rural Apollo, most august of gods.*
*Hard by, fair mansions have been reared for us*
*His herdsmen; us who guard with might and main*
*His riches that are more than tongue may tell:*
*Casting our seed o'er fallows thrice upturn'd*
*Or four times by the share; the bounds whereof*
*Well do the delvers know, whose busy feet*
*Troop to his wine-vats in fair summer-time.*
*Yea, all these acres wise Augéas owns,*
*These corn-clad uplands and these orchards green,*
*Far as yon ledges whence the cataracts leap.*
*Here do we haunt, here toil, as is the wont*
*Of labourers in the fields, the livelong day.*
*But prythee tell me thou—so shalt thou best*
*Serve thine own interests—wherefore art thou here?*
*Seeking Augéas, or mayhap some slave*
*That serves him? I can tell thee and I will*
*All thou would'st know: for of no churlish blood*
*Thou camest, nor wert nurtured as a churl:*
*That read I in thy stateliness of form;*
*The sons of heaven move thus among mankind."*

*Then answered him the warrior son of Zeus.*
*"Yea, veteran, I would see the Epéan King*

*Augéas; surely for this end I came.*
*If he bides there amongst his citizens,*
*Ruling the folk, determining the laws,*
*Look, father; bid some serf to be my guide,*
*Some honoured master-worker in the fields,*
*Who to shrewd questions shrewdly can reply.*
*Are not we made dependent each on each?"*

*To him the good old swain made answer thus:*
*"Stranger, some god hath timed thy visit here,*
*And given thee straightway all thy heart's desire.*
*Hither Augéas, offspring of the Sun,*
*Came, with young Phyleus splendid in his strength,*
*But yesterday from the city, to review*
*(Not in one day) his multitudinous wealth.*
*Methinks e'en princes say within themselves,*
*'The safeguard of the flock's the master's eye.'*
*But haste, we'll seek him: to my own fold I*
*Will pilot thee; there haply find the King."*

*He said and went in front: but pondered much*
*(As he surveyed the lion-skin and the club,*
*Itself an armful) whence this stranger came;*
*And fain had asked. But fear recalled the words*
*That trembled on his lip, the fear to say*

*Aught that his fiery friend might take amiss.*
*For who can fathom all his fellow's mind?*

*The dogs perceived their coming, yet far off:*
*They scented flesh, they heard the thud of feet:*
*And with wild gallop, baying furiously,*
*Ran at Amphitryon's son: but feebly whined*
*And fawned upon the old man at his side.*
*Then Heracles, just lifting from the ground*
*A pebble, scared them home, and with hard words*
*Cursed the whole pack; and having stopped their din*
*(Inly rejoiced, nathless, to see them guard*
*So well an absent master's house) he spake:*

*"Lo! what a friend the royal gods have given*
*Man in the dog! A trusty servant he!*
*Had he withal an understanding heart,*
*To teach him when to rage and when forbear,*
*What brute could claim like praise? But, lacking wit,*
*'T is but a passionate random-raving thing."*

*He spake: the dogs ran scurrying to their lairs.*
*And now the sun wheeled round his westering car*
*And led still evening on: from every field*
*Came thronging the fat flocks to bield and byre.*
*Then in their thousands, drove on drove, the kine*

*Came into view; as rainclouds, onward driven*
*By stress of gales, the west or mighty north,*
*Come up o'er all the heaven; and none may count*
*And naught may stay them as they sweep through air;*
*Such multitudes the storm's strength drives ahead,*
*Such multitudes climb surging in the rear—*
*So in swift sequence drove succeeded drove,*
*And all the champaign, all the highways swarmed*
*With tramping oxen; all the sumptuous leas*
*Rang with their lowing. Soon enough the stalls*
*Were populous with the laggard-footed kine,*
*Soon did the sheep lie folded in their folds.*
*Then of that legion none stood idle, none*
*Gaped listless at the herd, with naught to do:*
*But one drew near and milked them, binding clogs*
*Of wood with leathern thongs around their feet:*
*One brought, all hungering for the milk they loved,*
*The longing young ones to the longing dams.*
*One held the pail, one pressed the dainty cheese,*
*Or drove the bulls home, sundered from the kine.*
*Pacing from stall to stall, Augéas saw*
*What revenue his herdsman brought him in.*
*With him his son surveyed the royal wealth,*
*And, strong of limb and purpose, Heracles.*
*Then, though the heart within him was as steel,*
*Framed to withstand all shocks, Amphitryon's son*

*Gazed in amazement on those thronging kine;*
*For none had deemed or dreamed that one, or ten,*
*Whose wealth was more than regal, owned those tribes:*
*Such huge largess the Sun had given his child,*
*First of mankind for multitude of flocks.*
*The Sun himself gave increase day by day*
*To his child's herds: whate'er diseases spoil*
*The farmer, came not there; his kine increased*
*In multitude and value year by year:*
*None cast her young, or bear unfruitful males.*
*Three hundred bulls, white-pasterned, crumple-horned,*
*Ranged amid these, and eke two hundred roans,*
*Sires of a race to be: and twelve besides*
*Herded amongst them, sacred to the Sun.*
*Their skin was white as swansdown, and they moved*
*Like kings amid the beasts of laggard foot.*
*Scorning the herd in uttermost disdain*
*They cropped the green grass in untrodden fields:*
*And when from the dense jungle to the plain*
*Leapt a wild beast, in quest of vagrant cows;*
*Scenting him first, the twelve went forth to war.*
*Stern was their bellowing, in their eye sat death,*
*Foremost of all for mettle and for might*
*And pride of heart loomed Phaeton: him the swains*
*Regarded as a star; so bright he shone*
*Among the herd, the cynosure of eyes.*

*He, soon as he descried the sun-dried skin*
*Of the grim lion, made at Heracles*
*(Whose eye was on him)—fain to make his crest*
*And sturdy brow acquainted with his flanks.*
*Straight the prince grasped him with no tender grasp*
*By the left horn, and bowed that giant bulk*
*To earth, neck foremost; then, by pressure brought*
*To bear upon his shoulder, forced him back.*
*The web of muscles that enwraps the nerves*
*Stood out from the brute's fore-arm plain to see.*
*Marvelled the King, and Phyleus his brave son,*
*At the strange prowess of Amphitryon's child.*

*Then townwards, leaving straight that rich champaign,*
*Stout Heracles his comrade, Phyleus fared;*
*And soon as they had gained the paven road,*
*Making their way hotfooted o'er a path*
*(Not o'er-conspicuous in the dim green wood)*
*That left the farm and threaded through the vines,*
*Out-spake unto the child of Zeus most high,*
*Who followed in his steps, Augeas' son,*
*O'er his right shoulder glancing pleasantly.*

*"O stranger, as some old familiar tale*
*I seem to cast thy history in my mind.*

*For there came one to Argos, young and tall,*
*By birth a Greek from Helicè-on-seas,*
*Who told this tale before a multitude:*
*How that an Argive in his presence slew*
*A fearful lion-beast, the dread and death*
*Of herdsmen; which inhabited a den*
*Or cavern by the grove of Nemean Zeus.*
*He may have come from sacred Argos' self,*
*Or Tiryns, or Mycenæ: what know I?*
*But thus he told his tale, and said the slayer*
*Was (if my memory serves me) Perseus' son.*
*Methinks no islander had dared that deed*
*Save thee: the lion's skin that wraps thy ribs*
*Argues full well some gallant feat of arms.*
*But tell me, warrior, first—that I may know*
*If my prophetic soul speak truth or not—*
*Art thou the man of whom that stranger Greek*
*Spoke in my hearing? Have I guessed aright?*
*How slew you single-handed that fell beast?*
*How came it among rivered Nemea's glens?*
*For none such monster could the eagerest eye*
*Find in all Greece: Greece harbours bear and boar,*
*And deadly wolf: but not this larger game.*
*'T was this that made his listeners marvel then:*
*They deemed he told them travellers' tales, to win*
*By random words applause from standers-by."*

*Then Phyleus from the mid-road edged away,*
*That both might walk abreast, and he might catch*
*More at his ease what fell from Heracles:*
*Who journeying now alongside thus began:*

*"On the prior matter, O Augéas' child,*
*Thine own unaided wit hath ruled aright.*
*But all that monster's history, how it fell,*
*Fain would I tell thee who hast ears to hear,*
*Save only whence it came: for none of all*
*The Argive host could read that riddle right.*
*Some god, we dimly guessed, our niggard vows*
*Resenting, had upon Phoroneus' realm*
*Let loose this very scourge of humankind.*
*On peopled Pisa plunging like a flood*
*The brute ran riot: notably it cost*
*Its neighbours of Bembina woes untold.*
*And here Eurystheus bade me try my first*
*Passage of arms, and slay that fearsome thing.*
*So with my buxom bow and quiver lined*
*With arrows I set forth: my left hand held*
*My club, a beetling olive's stalwart trunk*
*And shapely, still environed in its bark:*
*This hand had torn from holiest Helicon*
*The tree entire, with all its fibrous roots.*
*And finding soon the lion's whereabouts,*

*I grasped my bow, and on the bent horn slipped*
*The string, and laid thereon the shaft of death.*
*And, now all eyes, I watched for that fell thing,*
*In hopes to view him ere he spied out me.*
*But midday came, and nowhere could I see*
*One footprint of the beast or hear his roar:*
*And, trust me, none appeared of whom to ask,*
*Herdsman or labourer, in the furrowed lea;*
*For wan dismay kept each man in his hut.*
*Still on I footed, searching through and through*
*The leafy mountain-passes, till I saw*
*The creature, and forthwith essayed my strength.*
*Gorged from some gory carcass, on he stalked*
*At eve towards his lair; his grizzled mane,*
*Shoulders, and grim glad visage, all adrip*
*With carnage; and he licked his bearded lips.*
*I, crouched among the shadows of the trees*
*On the green hill-top, waited his approach,*
*And as he came I aimed at his left flank.*
*The barbèd shaft sped idly, nor could pierce*
*The flesh, but glancing dropped on the green grass.*
*He, wondering, raised forthwith his tawny head,*
*And ran his eyes o'er all the vicinage,*
*And snarled and gave to view his cavernous throat.*
*Meanwhile I levelled yet another shaft,*
*Ill pleased to think my first had fled in vain.*

*In the mid-chest I smote him, where the lungs*
*Are seated: still the arrow sank not in,*
*But fell, its errand frustrate, at his feet.*
*Once more was I preparing, sore chagrined,*
*To draw the bowstring, when the ravenous beast*
*Glaring around espied me, lashed his sides*
*With his huge tail, and opened war at once.*
*Swelled his vast neck, his dun locks stood on end*
*With rage: his spine moved sinuous as a bow,*
*Till all his weight hung poised on flank and loin.*
*And e'en as, when a chariot-builder bends*
*With practised skill his shafts of splintered fig,*
*Hot from the fire, to be his axle-wheels;*
*Flies the tough-rinded sapling from the hands*
*That shape it, at a bound recoiling far:*
*So from far-off the dread beast, all of a heap,*
*Sprang on me, hungering for my life-blood. I*
*Thrust with one hand my arrows in his face*
*And my doffed doublet, while the other raised*
*My seasoned cudgel o'er his crest, and drave*
*Full at his temples, breaking clean in twain*
*On the fourfooted warrior's hairy scalp*
*My club; and ere he reached me, down he fell.*
*Headlong he fell, and poised on tremulous feet*
*Stood, his head wagging, and his eyes grown dim;*
*For the shrewd stroke had shattered brain and bone.*

*I, marking him beside himself with pain,*
*Fell, ere recovering he should breathe again,*
*At vantage on his solid sinewy neck,*
*My bow and woven quiver thrown aside.*
*With iron clasp I gripped him from the rear*
*(His talons else had torn me) and, my foot*
*Set on him, forced to earth by dint of heel*
*His hinder parts, my flanks intrenched the while*
*Behind his fore-arm; till his thews were stretched*
*And strained, and on his haunches stark he stood*
*And lifeless; hell received his monstrous ghost.*
*Then with myself I counselled how to strip*
*From off the dead beast's limbs his shaggy hide,*
*A task full onerous, since I found it proof*
*Against all blows of steel or stone or wood.*
*Some god at last inspired me with the thought,*
*With his own claws to rend the lion's skin.*
*With these I flayed him soon, and sheathed and armed*
*My limbs against the shocks of murderous war.*
*Thus, sir, the Nemean lion met his end,*
*Erewhile the constant curse of beast and man."*

# *IDYLL XXVI*

## THE BACCHANALS

*Agavè of the vermeil-tinted cheek*
*And Ino and Autonoä marshalled erst*
*Three bands of revellers under one hill-peak.*
*They plucked the wild-oak's matted foliage first,*
*Lush ivy then, and creeping asphodel;*
*And reared therewith twelve shrines amid the untrodden fell:*

*To Semelè three, to Dionysus nine.*
*Next, from a vase drew offerings subtly wrought,*
*And prayed and placed them on each fresh green shrine;*
*So by the god, who loved such tribute, taught.*
*Perched on the sheer cliff, Pentheus could espy*
*All, in a mastick hoar ensconced that grew thereby.*

*Autonoä marked him, and with frightful cries*
*Flew to make havoc of those mysteries weird*
*That must not be profaned by vulgar eyes.*
*Her frenzy frenzied all. Then Pentheus feared*
*And fled: and in his wake those damsels three,*
*Each with her trailing robe up-gathered to the knee.*

*"What will ye, dames?" quoth Pentheus. "Thou*
*shalt guess*
*At what we mean, untold," Autonoä said.*
*Agavè moaned—so moans a lioness*
*Over her young one—as she clutched his head:*
*While Ino on the carcass fairly laid*
*Her heel, and wrenched away shoulder and shoulder-*
*blade.*

*Autonoä's turn came next: and what remained*
*Of flesh their damsels did among them share,*
*And back to Thebes they came all carnage-stained,*
*And planted not a king but aching there.*
*Warned by this tale, let no man dare defy*
*Great Bacchus; lest a death more awful he should die,*

*And when he counts nine years or scarcely ten,*
*Rush to his ruin. May I pass my days*
*Uprightly, and be loved of upright men!*
*And take this motto, all who covet praise:*
*('T was Ægis-bearing Zeus that spake it first:)*
*"The godly seed fares well: the wicked's is accurst."*

*Now bless ye Bacchus, whom on mountain snows,*
*Prisoned in his thigh till then, the Almighty laid.*
*And bless ye fairfaced Semelè, and those*

*Her sisters, hymned of many a hero-maid,*
*Who wrought, by Bacchus fired, a deed which none*
*May gainsay — who shall blame that which a god hath done?*

# *IDYLL XXVII*

## A COUNTRYMAN'S WOOING

DAPHNIS A MAIDEN

THE MAIDEN. *How fell sage Helen? through a swain like thee.*

DAPHNIS. *Nay the true Helen's just now kissing me.*

THE MAIDEN. *Satyr, ne'er boast: "what's idler than a kiss?"*

DAPHNIS. *Yet in such pleasant idling there is bliss.*

THE MAIDEN. *I'll wash my mouth: where go thy kisses then?*

DAPHNIS. *Wash, and return it—to be kissed again.*

THE MAIDEN. *Go kiss your oxen, and not unwed maids.*

DAPHNIS. *Ne'er boast; for beauty is a dream that fades.*

THE MAIDEN. *Past grapes are grapes: dead roses keep their smell.*

DAPHNIS. *Come to yon olives: I have a tale to tell.*

THE MAIDEN. *Not I: you fooled me with smooth words before.*

DAPHNIS. *Come to yon elms, and hear me pipe once more.*

THE MAIDEN. *Pipe to yourself: your piping makes me cry.*

DAPHNIS. *A maid, and flout the Paphian? Fie, oh fie!*

THE MAIDEN. *She's naught to me, if Artemis' favour last.*

DAPHNIS. *Hush, ere she smite you and entrap you fast.*

THE MAIDEN. *And let her smite me, trap me as she will!*

DAPHNIS. *Your Artemis shall be your saviour still?*

THE MAIDEN. *Unhand me! What, again? I'll tear your lip.*

DAPHNIS. *Can you, could damsel e'er, give Love the slip?*

THE MAIDEN. *You are his bondslave, but not I, by Pan!*

DAPHNIS. *I doubt he'll give thee to a worser man.*

THE MAIDEN. *Many have wooed me, but I fancied none.*

DAPHNIS. *Till among many came the destined one.*

THE MAIDEN. *Wedlock is woe. Dear lad, what can I do?*

DAPHNIS. *Woe it is not, but joy and dancing too.*

THE MAIDEN. *Wives dread their husbands: so I've heard it said.*

DAPHNIS. *Nay, they rule o'er them. What does woman dread?*

THE MAIDEN. *Then children — Eileithya's dart is keen.*

DAPHNIS. *But the deliverer, Artemis, is your queen.*

THE MAIDEN. *And bearing children all our grace destroys.*

DAPHNIS. *Bear them and shine more lustrous in your boys.*

THE MAIDEN. *Should I say yea, what dower awaits me then?*

DAPHNIS. *Thine are my cattle, thine this glade and glen.*

THE MAIDEN. *Swear not to wed, then leave me in my woe?*

DAPHNIS. *Not I, by Pan, though thou should'st bid me go.*

THE MAIDEN. *And shall a cot be mine, with farm and fold?*

DAPHNIS. *Thy cot's half-built, fair wethers range this wold.*

THE MAIDEN. *What, what to my old father must I say?*

DAPHNIS. *Soon as he hears my name he'll not say nay.*

THE MAIDEN. *Speak it: by e'en a name we're oft beguiled.*

DAPHNIS. *I'm Daphnis, Lycid's and Nomæa's child.*

THE MAIDEN. *Well-born indeed: and not less so am I.*

DAPHNIS. *I know—Menalcas' daughter may look high.*

THE MAIDEN. *That grove, where stands your sheep-fold, show me, please.*

DAPHNIS. *Nay look, how green, how tall my cypress-trees.*

THE MAIDEN. *Graze, goats: I go to learn the herdsman's trade.*

DAPHNIS. *Feed, bulls: I show my copses to my maid.*

THE MAIDEN. *Satyr, what mean you? You presume o'ermuch.*

DAPHNIS. *This waist is round, and pleasant to the touch.*

THE MAIDEN. *By Pan, I'm like to swoon! Unhand me pray!*

DAPHNIS. *Why be so timorous? Pretty coward, stay.*

THE MAIDEN. *This bank is wet: you've soiled my pretty gown.*

DAPHNIS. *See, a soft fleece to guard it I put down.*

THE MAIDEN. *And you've purloined my sash. What can this mean?*

DAPHNIS. *This sash I'll offer to the Paphian queen.*

THE MAIDEN. *Stay, miscreant—some one comes—I heard a noise.*

DAPHNIS. *'T is but the green trees whispering of our joys.*

THE MAIDEN. *You've torn my plaidie, and I am half unclad.*

DAPHNIS. *Anon I'll give you a yet ampler plaid.*
THE MAIDEN. *Generous just now, you'll one day grudge me bread.*
DAPHNIS. *Ah! for thy sake my life-blood I could shed.*
THE MAIDEN. *Artemis, forgive! Thy eremite breaks her vow.*
DAPHNIS. *Love, and Love's mother, claim a calf and cow.*
THE MAIDEN. *A woman I depart, my girlhood o'er.*
DAPHNIS. *Be wife, be mother; but a girl no more.*

*Thus interchanging whispered talk the pair,*
*Their faces all aglow, long lingered there.*
*At length the hour arrived when they must part.*
*With downcast eyes, but sunshine in her heart,*
*She went to tend her flock; while Daphnis ran*
*Back to his herded bulls, a happy man.*

# *IDYLL XXVIII*

## THE DISTAFF

*Distaff, blithely whirling distaff, azure-eyed Athena's gift*
*To the sex the aim and object of whose lives is household thrift,*
*Seek with me the gorgeous city raised by Neilus, where a plain*
*Roof of palm-green rush o'er-arches Aphroditè's hallowed fane.*
*Thither ask I Zeus to waft me, fain to see my old friend's face,*
*Nicias, o'er whose birth presided every passion-breathing Grace;*
*Fain to meet his answering welcome; and anon deposit thee*
*In his lady's hands, thou marvel of laborious ivory.*
*Many a manly robe ye'll fashion, much translucent maiden's gear;*
*Nay, should e'er the fleecy mothers twice within the selfsame year*
*Yield their wool in yonder pasture, Theugenis of the dainty feet*

*Would perform the double labour: matron's cares to her*
*are sweet.*
*To an idler or a trifler I had verily been loth*
*To resign thee, O my distaff, for the same land bred us*
*both:*
*In the land Corinthian Archias built aforetime, thou*
*hadst birth,*
*In our island's core and marrow, whence have sprung*
*the kings of earth:*
*To the home I now transfer thee of a man who knows*
*full well*
*Every craft whereby men's bodies dire diseases may*
*repel:*
*There to live in sweet Miletus. Lady of the Distaff she*
*Shall be named, and oft reminded of her poet-friend by*
*thee:*
*Men shall look on thee and murmur to each other, "Lo!*
*how small*
*Was the gift, and yet how precious! Friendship's gifts*
*are priceless all."*

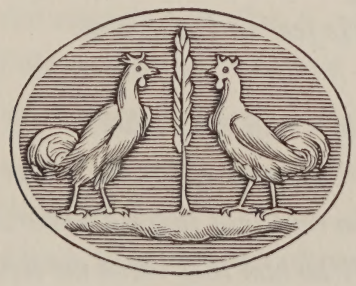
# *IDYLL XXIX*

## LOVES

*"Sincerity comes with the wine-cup," my dear:*
*Then now o'er our wine-cups let us be sincere.*
*My soul's treasured secret to you I'll impart;*
*It is this; that I never won fairly your heart.*
*One half of my life, I am conscious, has flown;*
*The residue lives on your image alone.*
*You are kind, and I dream I'm in paradise then;*
*You are angry, and lo! all is darkness again.*
*It is right to torment one who loves you? Obey*
*Your elder; 't were best; and you'll thank me one day.*
*Settle down in one nest on one tree (taking care*
*That no cruel reptile can clamber up there);*
*As it is with your lovers you're fairly perplext;*
*One day you choose one bough, another the next.*
*Whoe'er at all struck by your graces appears,*
*Is more to you straight than the comrade of years;*
*While he's like the friend of a day put aside;*
*For the breath of your nostrils, I think, is your pride.*
*Form a friendship, for life, with some likely young lad;*
*So doing, in honour your name shall be had.*
*Nor would Love use you hardly; though lightly can he*
*Bind strong men in chains, and has wrought upon me*

*Till the steel is as wax—but I'm longing to press*
*That exquisite mouth with a clinging caress.*

*No? Reflect that you're older each year than the last;*
*That we all must grow gray, and the wrinkles come*
*fast.*
*Reflect, ere you spurn me, that youth at his sides*
*Wears wings; and once gone, all pursuit he derides:*
*Nor are men over keen to catch charms as they fly.*
*Think of this and be gentle, be loving as I:*
*When your years are maturer, we two shall be then*
*The pair in the Iliad over again.*
*But if you consign all my words to the wind*
*And say, "Why annoy me? you're not to my mind,"*
*I—who lately in quest of the Gold Fruit had sped*
*For your sake, or of Cerberus guard of the dead—*
*Though you called me, would ne'er stir a foot from my*
*door,*
*For my love and my sorrow thenceforth will be o'er.*



# *IDYLL XXX*

## THE DEATH OF ADONIS

*Cythera saw Adonis*
*And knew that he was dead;*
*She marked the brow, all grisly now,*
*The cheek no longer red;*
*And "Bring the boar before me"*
*Unto her Loves she said.*

*Forthwith her winged attendants*
*Ranged all the woodland o'er,*
*And found and bound in fetters*
*Threefold the grisly boar:*
*One dragged him at a rope's end*
*E'en as a vanquished foe;*
*One went behind and drave him*
*And smote him with his bow:*
*On paced the creature feebly;*
*He feared Cythera so.*

*To him said Aphroditè:*
*"So, worst of beasts, 't was you*
*Who rent that thigh asunder,*
*Who him that loved me slew?"*

*And thus the beast made answer:*
*"Cythera, hear me swear*
*By thee, by him that loved thee,*
*And by these bonds I wear,*
*And them before whose hounds I ran—*
*I meant no mischief to the man*
*Who seemed to thee so fair.*

*"As on a carven statue*
*Men gaze, I gazed on him;*
*I seemed on fire with mad desire*
*To kiss that offered limb:*
*My ruin, Aphroditè,*
*Thus followed from my whim.*

*"Now therefore take and punish*
*And fairly cut away*
*These all unruly tusks of mine;*
*For to what end serve they?*
*And if thine indignation*
*Be not content with this,*
*Cut off the mouth that ventured*
*To offer him a kiss"—*

*But Aphroditè pitied*
*And bade them loose his chain.*

*The boar from that day forward*
*Still followed in her train;*
*Nor ever to the wildwood*
*Attempted to return,*
*But in the focus of Desire*
*Preferred to burn and burn.*

# *IDYLL XXXI*

## LOVES

*Ah for this the most accursèd, unendurable of ills!*
*Nigh two months a fevered fancy for a maid my bosom fills.*
*Fair she is, as other damsels: but for what the simplest swain*
*Claims from the demurest maiden, I must sue and sue in vain.*
*Yet doth now this thing of evil my longsuffering heart beguile,*
*Though the utmost she vouchsafes me is the shadow of a smile:*
*And I soon shall know no respite, have no solace e'en in sleep.*
*Yesterday I watched her pass me, and from down-dropt eyelids peep*
*At the face she dared not gaze on—every moment blushing more—*
*And my love took hold upon me as it never took before.*
*Home I went a wounded creature, with a gnawing at my heart;*
*And unto the soul within me did my bitterness impart.*

*"Soul, why deal with me in this wise? Shall thy folly*
*know no bound?*
*Canst thou look upon these temples, with their locks of*
*silver crowned,*
*And still deem thee young and shapely? Nay, my soul,*
*let us be sage;*
*Act as they that have already sipped the wisdom-cup of*
*age.*
*Men have loved and have forgotten. Happiest of all is he*
*To the lover's woes a stranger, from the lover's fetters*
*free:*
*Lightly his existence passes, as a wild-deer fleeting*
*fast:*
*Tamed, it may be, he shall voyage in a maiden's wake*
*at last:*
*Still to-day 't is his to revel with his mates in boyhood's*
*flowers.*
*As to thee, thy brain and marrow passion evermore*
*devours,*
*Prey to memories that haunt thee e'en in visions of the*
*night;*
*And a year shall scarcely pluck thee from thy miserable*
*plight."*

*Such and divers such reproaches did I heap upon my*
*soul.*

*And my soul in turn made answer:—"Whoso deems he*
*can control*
*Wily love, the same shall lightly gaze upon the stars of*
*heaven*
*And declare by what their number overpasses seven times*
*seven.*
*Will I, nill I, I may never from my neck his yoke unloose.*
*So, my friend, a god hath willed it: he whose plots could*
*outwit Zeus,*
*And the queen whose home is Cyprus. I, a leaflet of to-day,*
*I whose breath is in my nostrils, am I wrong to own his*
*sway?"*

# *FRAGMENT*

## FROM THE "BERENICE"

*Ye that would fain net fish and wealth withal,*
*For bare existence harrowing yonder mere,*
*To this our Lady slay at even-fall*
*That holy fish, which, since it hath no peer*
*For gloss and sheen, the dwellers about here*
*Have named the Silver Fish. This done, let down*
*Your nets, and draw them up, and never fear*
*To find them empty* * * *

# *EPIGRAMS AND EPITAPHS*

# *EPIGRAMS & EPITAPHS*

## I

*Yours be yon dew-steep'd roses, yours be yon*
*Thick-clustering ivy, maids of Helicon:*
*Thine, Pythian Pæan, that dark-foliaged bay;*
*With such thy Delphian crags thy front array.*
*This horn'd and shaggy ram shall stain thy shrine,*
*Who crops e'en now the feathering turpentine.*

## II

*To Pan doth white-limbed Daphnis offer here*
*(He once piped sweetly on his herdsman's flute)*
*His reeds of many a stop, his barbèd spear,*
*And scrip, wherein he held his hoards of fruit.*

## III

*Daphnis, thou slumberest on the leaf-strown lea,*
*Thy frame at rest, thy springes newly spread*
*O'er the fell-side. But two are hunting thee:*
*Pan, and Priapus with his fair young head*
*Hung with wan ivy. See! they come, they leap*
*Into thy lair—fly, fly,—shake off the coil of sleep!*

## IV

*For yon oaken avenue, swain, you must steer,*
*Where a statue of figwood, you'll see, has been set:*
*It has never been barked, has three legs and no ear;*
*But I think there is life in the patriarch yet.*
*He is handsomely shrined within fair chapel-walls;*
*Where, fringed with sweet cypress and myrtle and bay,*
*A stream ever-fresh from the rock's hollow falls,*
*And the ringleted vine her ripe store doth display:*
*And the blackbirds, those shrill-piping songsters of spring,*
*Wake the echoes with wild inarticulate song:*
*And the notes of the nightingale plaintively ring,*
*As she pours from her dun throat her lay sweet and strong.*

*Sitting there, to Priapus, the gracious one, pray*
*That the lore he has taught me I soon may unlearn:*
*Say I'll give him a kid, and in case he says nay*
*To this offer, three victims to him will I burn;*
*A kid, a fleeced ram, and a lamb sleek and fat;*
*He will listen, mayhap, to my prayers upon that.*

## V

*Prythee, sing something sweet to me—you that can play*
*First and second at once. Then I too will essay*
*To croak on the pipes: and yon lad shall salute*
*Our ears with a melody breathed through his flute.*
*In the cave by the green oak our watch we will keep,*
*And goatish old Pan we'll defraud of his sleep.*

## VI

*Poor Thyrsis! What boots it to weep out thine eyes?*
*Thy kid was a fair one, I own:*
*But the wolf with his cruel claw made her his prize,*
*And to darkness her spirit hath flown.*
*Do the dogs cry? What boots it? In spite of their cries*
*There is left of her never a bone.*

## VII

### FOR A STATUE OF ÆSCULAPIUS

*Far as Miletus travelled Pæan's son;*
*There to be guest of Nicias, guest of one*
*Who heals all sickness; and who still reveres*
*Him, for his sake this cedarn image rears.*
*The sculptor's hand right well did Nicias fill;*
*And here the sculptor lavished all his skill.*

## VIII

### ORTHO'S EPITAPH

*Friend, Ortho of Syracuse gives thee this charge:*
*Never venture out, drunk, on a wild winter's night.*
*I did so and died. My possessions were large;*
*Yet the turf that I'm clad with is strange to me quite.*

## IX

### EPITAPH OF CLEONICUS

*Man, husband existence: ne'er launch on the sea*
*Out of season: our tenure of life is but frail.*

*Think of poor Cleonicus: for Phasos sailed he*
*From the valleys of Syria, with many a bale:*
*With many a bale, ocean's tides he would stem*
*When the Pleiads were sinking; and he sank with them.*

## X

### FOR A STATUE OF THE MUSES

*To you this marble statue, maids divine,*
*Xenocles raised, one tribute unto nine*
*Your votary all admit him: by this skill*
*He gat him fame: and you he honours still.*

## XI

### EPITAPH OF EUSTHENES

*Here the shrewd physiognomist Eusthenes lies,*
*Who could tell all your thoughts by a glance at your eyes.*
*A stranger, with strangers his honoured bones rest;*
*They valued sweet song, and he gave them his best.*
*All the honours of death doth the poet possess:*
*If a small one, they mourned for him nevertheless.*

## XII

### FOR A TRIPOD ERECTED BY DAMOTELES TO BACCHUS

*The precentor Damoteles, Bacchus, exalts*
*Your tripod, and, sweetest of deities, you.*
*He was champion of men, if his boyhood had faults;*
*And he ever loved honour and seemliness too.*

## XIII

### FOR A STATUE OF ANACREON

*This statue, stranger, scan with earnest gaze;*
*And, home returning, say "I have beheld*
*Anacreon, in Teos; him whose lays*
*Were all unmatched among our sires of eld."*
*Say further: "Youth and beauty pleased him best;"*
*And all the man will fairly stand exprest.*

## XIV

### EPITAPH OF EURYMEDON

*Thou hast gone to the grave, and abandoned thy son*
*Yet a babe, thy own manhood but scarcely begun.*
*Thou art throned among gods: and thy country will take*
*Thy child to her heart, for his brave father's sake.*

## XV

### ANOTHER

*Prove, traveller, now, that you honour the brave*
*Above the poltroon, when he's laid in the grave,*
*By murmuring "Peace to Eurymedon dead."*
*The turf should lie light on so sacred a head.*

## XVI

### FOR A STATUE OF THE HEAVENLY APHRODITE

*Aphrodite stands here; she of heavenly birth;*
*Not that base one who's wooed by the children of*
*earth.*
*'T is a goddess; bow down. And one blemishless*
*all,*
*Chrysogonè, placed her in Amphicles' hall:*
*Chrysogonè's heart, as her children, was his,*
*And each year they knew better what happiness is.*
*For, Queen, at life's outset they made thee their*
*friend;*
*Religion is policy too in the end.*

## XVII

### TO EPICHARMUS

*Read these lines to Epicharmus. They are Dorian, as was he*
*The sire of Comedy.*
*Of his proper self bereavèd, Bacchus, unto thee we rear*
*His brazen image here;*
*We in Syracuse who sojourn, elsewhere born. Thus much we can*
*Do for our countryman,*
*Mindful of the debt we owe him. For, possessing ample store*
*Of legendary lore,*
*Many a wholesome word, to pilot youths and maids thro' life, he spake:*
*We honour him for their sake.*

## XVIII

### EPITAPH OF CLEITA NURSE OF MEDEIUS

*The babe Medeius to his Thracian nurse*
*This stone—inscribed* TO CLEITA *—reared in the mid-highway.*

*Her modest virtues oft shall men rehearse;*
*Who doubts it? is not "Cleita's worth" a proverb to*
*this day?*

## XIX

### TO ARCHILOCHUS

*Pause, and scan well Archilochus, the bard of elder*
*days,*
*By east and west*
*Alike's confest*
*The mighty lyrist's praise.*
*Delian Apollo loved him well, and well the sister-choir:*
*His songs were fraught*
*With subtle thought,*
*And matchless was his lyre.*

## XX

### UNDER A STATUE OF PEISANDER (WHO WROTE THE LABOURS OF HERACLES)

*He whom ye gaze on was the first*
*That in quaint song the deeds rehearsed*
*Of him whose arm was swift to smite,*
*Who dared the lion to the fight:*

*That tale, so strange, so manifold,*
*Peisander of Cameirus told.*
*For this good work, thou may'st be sure,*
*His country placed him here,*
*In solid brass that shall endure*
*Through many a month and year.*

## XXI

### EPITAPH OF HIPPONAX

*Behold Hipponax' burialplace,*
*A true bard's grave.*
*Approach it not, if you're a base*
*And base-born knave.*
*But if your sires were honest men*
*And unblamed you,*
*Sit down thereon serenely then,*
*And eke sleep too.*

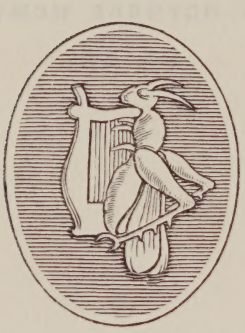
* * *

*Tuneful Hipponax rests him here.*
*Let no base rascal venture near.*
*Ye who rank high in birth and mind*
*Sit down—and sleep, if so inclined.*

## XXII

### ON HIS OWN BOOK

*Not my namesake of Chios, but I, who belong*
*To the Syracuse burghers, have sung you my song.*
*I'm Praxagoras' son by Philinna the fair,*
*And I never asked praise that was owing elsewhere.*



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